

# THE VILLAGE HOMES OF ENGLAND

TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY SYDNEY R. JONES, WITH  
SOME ADDITIONAL DRAWINGS  
IN COLOUR BY WILFRID BALL,  
R.E., & JOHN FULLWOOD, R.B.A.

EDITED BY CHARLES HOLME

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# INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION



THE old village homes of England are a precious heritage of the past. Of singular beauty, and fair to look upon, they create a wide and lasting interest. In all parts of the country are to be found many unpretentious examples of quiet and homely taste, erected by the native craftsmen of a sturdy and vigorous peasantry. These buildings are fraught with an appeal to the mind and have a significance deeper than is conveyed by mere terms of stone, of

brick, of timber. They stand for much that is peculiarly and characteristically English. They are records of lives well spent; they tell of contented possession, of love of home, and country, and memory; they have witnessed the passing of generations of the nation's countrymen, and live on as outward symbols of their intellectual life. With them are associated those ideas of order, of security and comfort, that result from the observance of long-established custom and usage; they bear witness to well-settled beliefs transmitted from father to son. The old oaks and high elms, the green common fringed by hedgerows, the stile and ancient right-of-way, seem no more the natural growth of time and the soil than do the old rustic dwellings, that bear the marks of antiquity upon them and date back through many ages. It is this sense of settled stability, this association with times far distant from the present, that ever appeal to the imagination and sentiment.

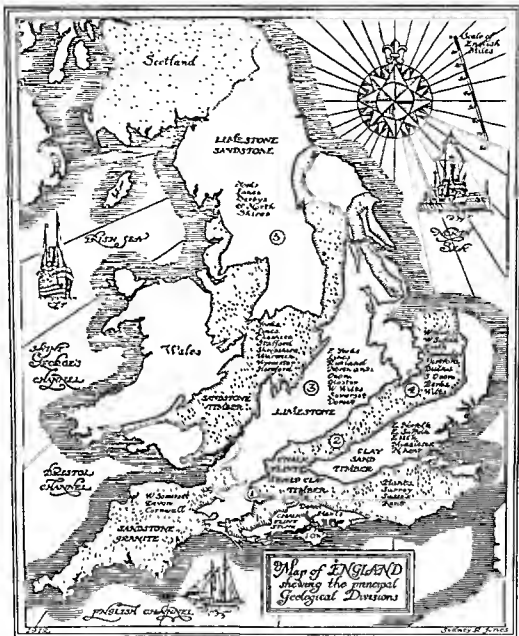
It is not, however, the claims of association that give to these old dwellings their greatest charm; they possess a more concrete power and arrest attention by reason of their material worth. Considered as examples of building they have much to recommend them, and quietly assert themselves as works of beauty to which time has but given an added value. In them are exhibited the true principles of building, and work showing so much knowledge, so truly observing limitations, so expressive, direct, and honest, must be ranked high in the scale of accomplishment.

The old cottages, as we see them, are the result of a variety of influences and fulfil many conditions which make for good architecture. Ever present there is a feeling for harmony. The harmony that should exist between a building and its surroundings is probably nowhere better illustrated than in the cottages. Set amid natural scenes, in rich valleys, or clustering on the hillsides, they seem part of the landscape; no conflicting note meets the eye, and building blends with building and with the environment. This characteristic is well demonstrated in the village of Rockingham (page 6), with its cottages of local stone and thatch placed on the ascending hill and overlooking the plain. One reason for this harmony is not far to seek. The builders ordinarily used the materials indigenous to the locality. A stone-producing district shows cottages of stone; where forests grew timber construction is in evidence; chalk finds expression in plasterwork; and the clay lands exhibit the use of bricks.

Instances may be multiplied, and throughout the country is everywhere seen this influence of local product.

It must be remembered that England is divided into geological areas which, with the surface growths of timber, account for the variety of building materials. The accompanying map (opposite page) roughly and broadly shows these areas and their yields; many smaller sub-divisions also occur, and the significance of local product can only be properly appreciated by consulting an accurately-made geological map. It can be stated as a fact that the products of nature are best suited to the localities in which they are found; imported materials never so well harmonise with the landscape as those native to it. Red bricks or blue slates look out of sympathy with the stone of a Cotswold village, as do flints among the timbered buildings of Cheshire. The old builders, by using local materials, acknowledged this artistic truth unconsciously doubtless, as economic necessity—governed by high cost of transport—compelled them to use that which was near to hand. To the acceptance of these conditions the excellence of our domestic architecture is largely due. The variety is endless, but the harmony with nature is all-pervading.

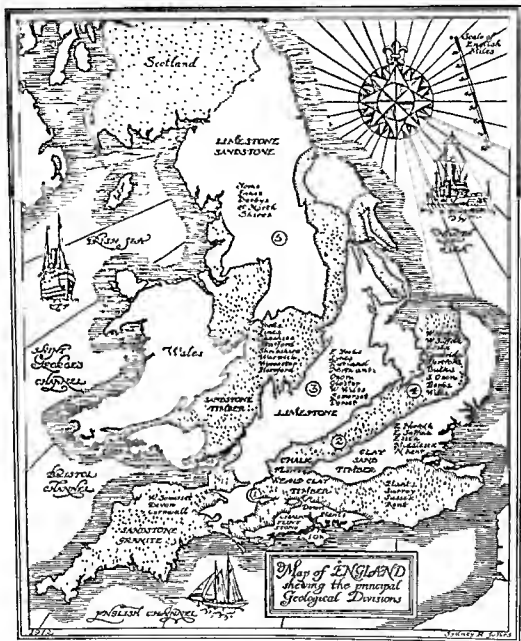
Tradition, or ancient custom, considered as an influence on cottage building, has left its evidence in material form. In different districts are to be seen groups of buildings which are all variations of a common type; no two are exactly alike, yet all bear relation one to another; they are shown how natural product was responsible for local materials; it remained civilisation of their own time. Local needs brought into being certain methods, enthusiasm for work brought certain refinements, and the limited means available fostered restraint. The development of these forces gradually evolved results which well satisfied the prevailing wants. And so hoods developed styles of building, very local, and expressive of the life of the native community. Difficulties of communication prevented inter-change of ideas, and each district shows its own inherent peculiarities unaffected by outside influences. As generation succeeded generation, local styles were adopted to suit new conditions or fresh methods, but radical changes were unknown. An intense conservatism prevailed, and care was taken not to break down hastily that which had been devised by previous generations and had stood the test of time: in their own works the craftsmen built in faith, not only for themselves, but for the future. By acknowledging tradition, by treating with respect the memory of former things, the craftsmen did not yield to mere copyism, but added their own stamp, and so gave to their work a living sturdiness and vitality; they gathered together the bequests of their forerunners and clothed them with their own thoughts. Cottages of a district, exhibiting like natural products in construction, agree together in general conception, but the individual and personal note distinguishes habitation from habitation. One village shows work in advance of its neighbour, or the sphere of activity of a particular workman can be traced. The expression of the north



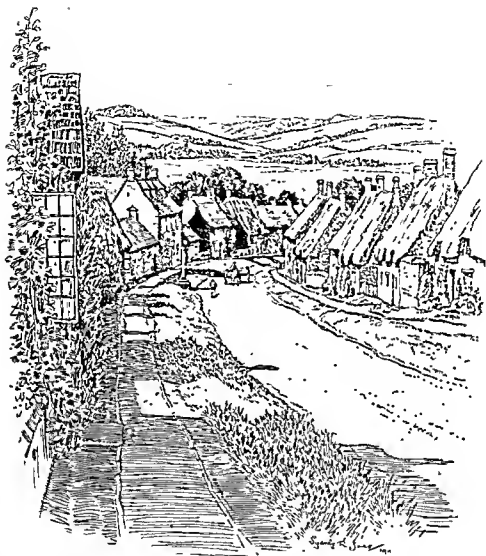
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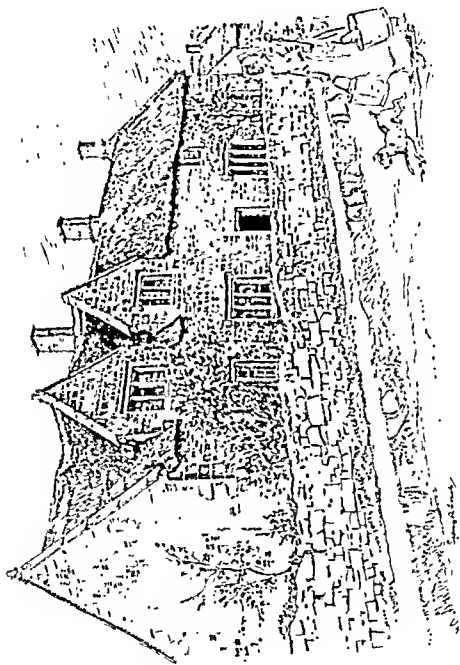
Tradition, or ancient custom, considered as an influence on cottage building, has left its evidence in material form. In different districts are to be seen groups of buildings which are all variations of a common type; no two are exactly alike, yet all bear relation one to another; they are the resultant factors of one source of inspiration. It has already been shown how natural product was responsible for local materials; it remained for the craftsmen to fashion them to meet the requirements of the civilisation of their own time. Local needs brought into being certain methods, enthusiasm for work brought certain refinements, and the limited means available fostered restraint. The development of these forces gradually evolved results which well satisfied the prevailing wants. And so traditions became established and were recognised. Different neighbourhoods developed styles of building, very local, and expressive of the life of the native community. Difficulties of communication prevented interchange of ideas, and each district shows its own inherent peculiarities unaffected by outside influences. As generation succeeded generation, local styles were adopted to suit new conditions or fresh methods, but radical changes were unknown. An intense conservatism prevailed, and care was taken not to break down hastily that which had been devised by previous generations and had stood the test of time: in their own works the craftsmen built in faith, not only for themselves, but for the future. By acknowledging tradition, by treating with respect the memory of former things, the craftsmen did not yield to mere copyism, but added their own stamp, and so gave to their work a living sturdiness and vitality; they gathered together the bequests of their forerunners and clothed them with their own thoughts. Cottages of a district, exhibiting like natural products in construction, agree together in general conception, but the individual and personal note distinguishes habitation from habitation. One village shows work in advance of its neighbour, or the sphere of activity of a particular workman can be traced. The expression of the north



GEOLOGICAL MAP OF ENGLAND



ROCKINGHAM, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



PRIESTLEIGH, SOMERSETSHIRE



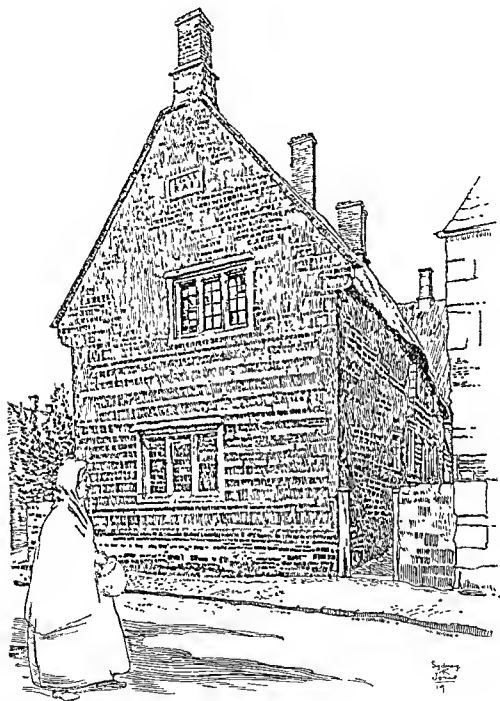
NETHER KELLET, LANCASHIRE

country differs from that of the south, as does the east from the west. A Somersetshire dwelling (page 7), as compared with one in Lancashire (above), displays in its features the operation of a different vein of thought. The southern county is one of great natural richness, of wooded uplands and fertile valleys; the peasantry seem fitted to the genial environment. In manipulation, in play of fancy, the buildings of the locality reflect the nature of the land and the people. Wild, rugged, and strong is the spirit of the northern county, and nowhere does it find better expression than in the old cottages, with their bold, unimaginative details.

Considered as a whole, old cottages throughout England are Gothic in character; the early ones intensely so, the later ones in a less degree. But this feeling never entirely disappeared. The coming of the Renaissance, the slowly improved facilities of transport and communication, had little effect upon them. Travelling from county to county, it is interesting to see how tenaciously the old traditions were observed and followed. Here are met with conceived in the classic manner; but, speaking generally, Gothic in feeling the cottages ever remained. Old workmen, still living, can remember the lingering of the old traditions; can tell of methods employed, and patterns used, which had their birth in mediæval times. The newer styles spent themselves upon the mansions of the rich, on public buildings, and in the towns, and it was left to builders of small houses and unambitious, homely cottages to keep alive and reproduce the ancient and native practices of the land.

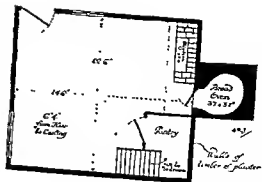
The geological map on page 5 may here be further considered. It forms the key to this volume. The districts now under review are five in number.



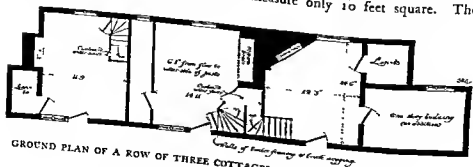


WILBARSTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The first includes the bordering counties of Somersetshire, Dorsetshire and Wiltshire. Oolitic and liassic limestones are found towards the west, and chalk, with flints, to the east. The buildings are chiefly of stone, or stone, flints, plaster, and brick used in combination; roofs are stone-slatted or thatched. Those parts of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire to be considered are situated on the chalk formation; walls of plaster, half-timber, flints, and brick, with roofs of thatch or tile, are common. Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Rutlandshire give a beautiful limestone, and the stone buildings of this locality constitute part of the Cotswold group. The chalk formation passes through Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk; plaster is the material generally used—either alone or with timber—and roofs are thatched or tiled. Wonderful brick chimneys, and boldly modelled exterior plasterwork, are to be seen here. The northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire and north Derbyshire show most conspicuously the use of stone for walls, and roofs of large stone slates. Cottages stand alone, in elusters, or in rows. The plan was invariably simple and contained within four walls. Its origin in early times and subsequent development, the architectural unit common to all types, and the position of the various features have already been dwelt upon.\* Accommodation varies, from two rooms in the small examples to as many as six or seven rooms in those of more generous dimensions. The cottage of two rooms, when standing alone and small in size, seems to suggest an early type. It has one room on the ground floor, and one above reached by a ladder or stairs opening directly from below. An example exists in which the rooms measure only 10 feet square. The



GROUND PLAN OF A COTTAGE AT  
LEEK WOOTTON, WARWICK

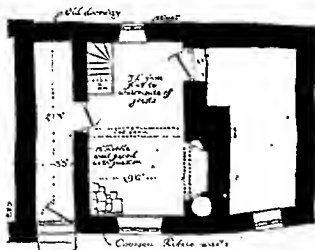


GROUND PLAN OF A ROW OF THREE COTTAGES AT KENILWORTH, WARWICKSHIRE

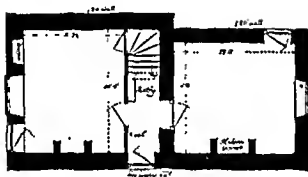
\* "Old English Country Cottages," THE STUDIO, 1906



OLD TURNPIKE COTTAGE BROCKENHURST ROAD HAMPSHIRE FROM A WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY WILFRID BALL R.E.



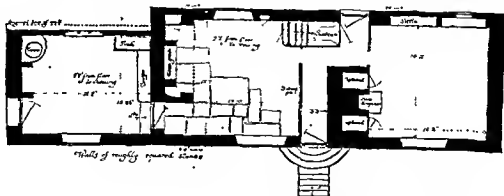
GROUND PLAN OF A COTTAGE AT  
HANWELL, OXFORDSHIRE



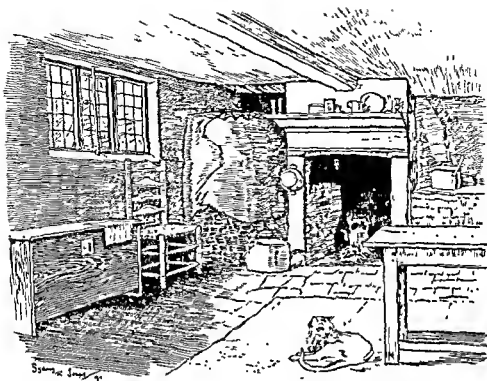
GROUND PLAN OF A COTTAGE AT  
GREAT BOURTON, OXFORDSHIRE

plan from Leek Wootton, in Warwickshire (page 10), shows this arrangement, though the dimensions are larger—14 feet 6 inches by 12 feet 6 inches. This type of dwelling is now a rarity. More common, but by no means usual, is the cluster or row of cottages, each member having one room on the ground floor and one over, and possibly augmented by outshoots or lean-tos. The three examples from Kenilworth (page 10), now demolished, were disposed in this manner; at each end a lean-to had been added. Generally speaking, cottages have two rooms on the ground floor and two, sometimes three, bedrooms over. The two stone-built cottages from Hanwell and Great Bourton, in Oxfordshire, shown on this page, have such accommodation.

The Hanwell drawing is interesting, inasmuch as it suggests the



GROUND PLAN OF A COTTAGE AT GREAT BOURTON, OXFORDSHIRE



UPPER BODDINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

plan of a mediæval hall ; there is the through passage from front to back, and a doorway in it giving access to the chambers of the dwelling. Larger cottages have better convenience, such as is exemplified by the second plan from Great Bounton on page 11.

Frequently there are no foundations, the walls having been erected directly upon the ground. Some walls are of great thickness, particularly when of stone, on the other hand, those of lath and plaster are often no more than a mere shell. The subject of walling shows a wonderful diversity of material, method and invention. In early times no doubt the ground floor consisted of the bare earth, strewn, for greater comfort, with rushes. Later, floors were of stone slabs, or bricks, or quarries, laid upon the earth. There was a general tendency to keep living-rooms large in size, one good room being preferred to two small ones ; when divided, partitions of oak framing and lath and plaster were used. Fireplaces, where they remain in their original state, are large in size, their ample dimensions, and the evident careful attention given to their construction, attest to their importance as contributory factors to the cottagers' comfort. The fire was placed upon a stone or brick hearth, as at Upper Boddington, in Northamptonshire (above), or upon the top of low ovens standing on the hearth. The chimney tapered up to the roof and was open to the sky. These open chimneys have now usually been bricked up, and the fire-

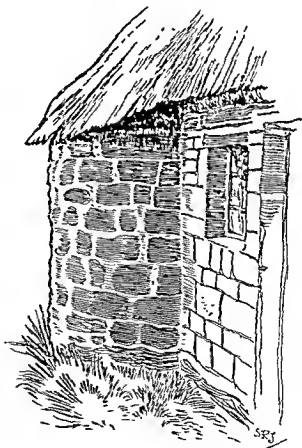


LOWER BODDINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

places filled in and fitted with *modern ranges or grates*. It must be remembered that households were dependent upon their own resources for supplies of bread, and the common practice of bread-making necessitated provision for baking. The bread oven was at one side of the fireplace, sometimes within the main walls of the building, sometimes projecting beyond; the illustration of Upper Boddington, already mentioned, shows the former arrangement, and the latter method is seen in the plan from Leek Wootton (page 10), and at Mollington, in Oxfordshire, on this page. It was of an oval shape, shallow in height, and domed at the top. A wood fire, placed inside, heated the *oven*; having served its purpose the fire was removed, the oven cleaned, and the dough put in to bake. The oven door opened into the main chimney and the smoke was thus carried away. With the decline of home bread-making, bread ovens have in a great measure ceased to be useful and are fast disappearing.

The ruined cottage at Lower Boddington, Northamptonshire (page 13), gives a sectional view of the internal construction generally adopted throughout England.

The large oaken beam, extending from wall to wall and centrally across the room, carried the joists, which, in turn, supported the floor of the room above. Joists were frequently left exposed on the under side, giving a decorative, timbered ceiling to the room below, or they carried a ceiling of plaster and the main beam only was left to view, often enriched by a simple moulding or chamfer. The height of rooms, from the floor to the under side of the joists, rarely exceeded 7 feet; instances have been noted giving this measurement variously at 5 feet 9 inches, 6 feet 1 inch, and 6 feet 4 inches. All the timber was used in a straightforward, workmanlike



MOLLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE

manner, simply tooled, or left much as it came from the wood-cutter's axe. The illustration shows the purlins and rafters which formed the roof, and the interior walls retaining their old plaster covering apparently composed of lime and sand, with the addition of hair and road scrapings—the composition customarily used by the village plasterer.

Thatch is still a common roof covering, though year by year it becomes less usual, and, for economic reasons, is supplanted by tiles or slates. It is invariably picturesque and always harmonizes with the building it covers. The transitory nature of this material precludes the consideration of old work, and it is the survival of old methods and practices that link up past tradition with present usage. At one time it must have been almost universally employed. Thatch requires a roof steeply pitched, so that the wet may be thrown off; and such roofs, when covered with tiles or slates, are evidences of this earlier form of covering, or of an old style influencing the use of newer materials. The thatcher's art is dying out, and often it is well-nigh impossible to get good thatching done. The older type of men, carrying on the long-practised traditions, seem to have imbibed the past ideals and give great thought to their work. They are careful to see that the straw is first placed in a large rectangular pile and well soaked with water, that it may settle into an almost solid mass upon the roof. The best is then selected, sorted, and tied up into small bundles ready for the thatcher's use. Each bundle has about an even mixture of "heads" and "tails" of straw showing at both ends; for, being so mixed, they make an even thatch and prevent the hollows forming which are so injurious to its lasting qualities. Reed thatching is distinguished by its great excellence, but reeds are only to be obtained in certain parts of the country.

Viewed in the light of modern knowledge, old cottages have their serious faults. They are often damp, ill-drained, and wanting in convenience and comfort; questions of site and aspect frequently seem to have escaped consideration. But attention must be given to the fact that sanitary science was in its infancy when they were built; they conformed to the then prevailing ideas and, presumably, suited the requirements of the people. Conceptions of convenience are comparative attributes and change with each generation; therefore work exhibiting such meritorious qualities cannot, and must not, be hastily condemned for its now considered faults.

The old country cottage is a relic of the past. Great vernacular styles of building, and the chain of events which produced them, are now but recollections of former things. The ancient picturesqueness and character of our villages are slowly disappearing, and strange it is that such an abandonment of so much that was good has come to pass. But conditions have changed, and present-day life, and thought, and work, make it impossible to build as our forefathers did.

Thoughts of the old inevitably lead to thoughts of the new. To us, in our own time, these survivals of an earlier age have much to teach. A study of them reveals the principles by which good and true work can once more be accomplished, and only by the observance of such principles will a living style in building again arise. It is a moral duty



to build our dwellings sincerely and well, to leave a worthy heritage to posterity, and for this end the source of inspiration can only be the good inherited from the past. A desire for houses beautiful to look upon, as well as convenient to live in, the growing appreciation of old work, and the undoubted present revival influenced by it, are happy signs of the times. But these signs are comparatively few and this ugly fact cannot be ignored:—that the average modern cottage or “villa,” too painfully obvious to need description, reflects the prevailing spirit of this present age, just as the modest dwellings of an old village bear witness to the ideals of those who built them.

Tradition in art, and excellence in the associated crafts, are vital assets to a nation's welfare: æsthetic influences make life beautiful as surely as material forces make life possible. High standards of taste can only be produced amid sympathetic surroundings, and honest efforts for the common good must be made, fostered, and encouraged. Until that time comes when the new is clothed with vitality and character and beauty, as was the old, until a common encouragement and general appreciation again arises, may the old cottages of England survive and be abiding influences for the good they have in them.

DIVISION I

SOUTHERN PLASTERWORK,  
FLINTWORK, BRICKWORK AND  
MASONRY

# I.—SOUTHERN PLASTERWORK, FLINTWORK, BRICKWORK AND MASONRY.



JOURNEY taken directly westward from London leads into the heart of that district anciently known as the kingdom of Wessex. It is a spacious, open country of gently undulating downs, plains, and *smooth-outlined hills*, and contrasts with the compact richness of Surrey, or the Hampshire water meadows — traversed by little brooks — through which it is approached. The villages nestle cosily in the lower lands and sheltered river valleys. The

neighbourhood of Salisbury gives access to the rivers Bourne, Avon, and Wylfe; up and down these river banks, overlooked by the uplands — sometimes half-wooded, sometimes treeless — which bound the Salisbury Plain, are to be seen houses and cottages that, collectively, form one of the most distinctive phases of our rural architecture.

The natural product hereabout is chalk; it is revealed by the railway cuttings and old pits from which it has been drawn for generations. Markedly its influence is seen in the walls, plaster-faced and washed a white or ochre colour. Village after village shows such treatment; the low walls, with rough and textural plaster finish, thatched over by roofs with far-projecting eaves. Embowered in trees and, as at the Winterbournes, intersected and bounded by clear streams, these villages present an unending series of pictures, perfect in their way. The buildings are more picturesque than architectural — if these two terms can be dissociated; truly architectural in exhibiting the right use of material and the relation of work to surrounding, yet



STRATFORD-SUB-CASTLE, WILTSHIRE

architectural in the homely rather than the grand sense. They have that unconsidered and haphazard look which makes for picturesqueness, but features of more than ordinary interest are absent.

Such cob-walled, plaster-faced cottages as may be seen in the Wiltshire villages differ little in appearance from cottages so constructed in other counties. Upon a low flint base from one to two feet high, the cob-wall was built. It was made of mud, reinforced with flint or rubble or broken bricks. The surfaces, both outside and inside, were finished with a covering of plaster, which was, as already mentioned, washed a white or ochre colour. The heads of the door and window openings were protected by strips of oak. Dormer windows were often carried up from the eaves, and a roof of thatch covered the whole. Extreme simplicity, combined with solidity of construction, was observed in both plans and elevations; the methods employed and materials used were not adaptable to richness or complexity of detail, and the local builders rightly confined themselves to the just limitations of their work.

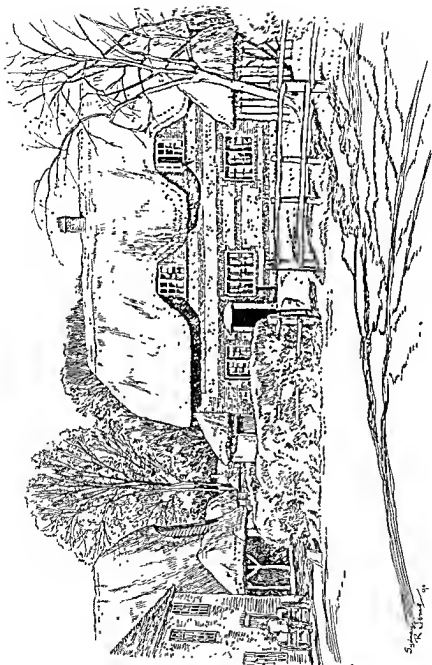
Flint is found with the chalk, and this material is of predominant interest. It is responsible for a style of building as individually distinctive and local as may be found in England. The work is, in some measure, akin to that of Kent and the Eastern Counties; but while continental influence is largely traceable in the east, the guiding inspiration in Wiltshire was of a purely

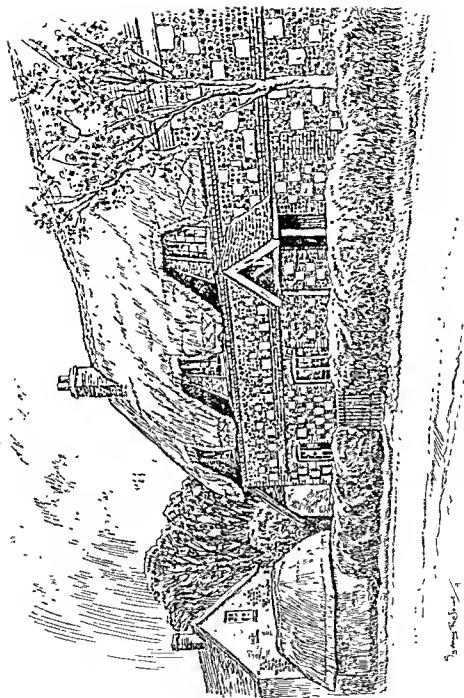


SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE



MIDDLE WOODFORD, WILTSHIRE





LOWER WOODFORD, WILTSHIRE



WYLYE, WILTSHIRE

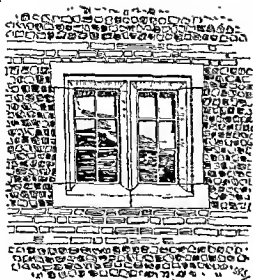
English origin. It was the peasant interpretation of a native style which came into being and left its mark alike on mansion, manor-house, and cottage dwelling. The absorbing interest of this flintwork is largely due to the characteristic properties of the material. Flint has a decorative quality peculiar to itself, its colour and its texture making it quite unlike other building materials. Stone differs considerably, some is hard, some soft, and it is warm or cold in colour; some is to be obtained only in thin layers, while large blocks of another variety are easily procured. But there is always a certain common relationship between the various kinds, and they lend themselves to harmonious effects. And so it is with bricks. But flint is a thing apart, and by its very isolation seems to demand effects of contrast. With this idea in mind the old builders seemed to have worked. A style of building was adopted, the character of which was almost wholly governed by the materials used; flint for the one part, and for the other stone or brick, or both introduced in conjunction.

Flint is difficult to manipulate and requires careful handling. The fine, sharp edges will easily injure the hands, and to-day workmen will, if possible, avoid using it. The varying sizes of broken flints do not easily lend themselves to being laid in even courses. Further, a wall constructed of so many small, irregularly-shaped component parts—as a flint wall is—requires considerable bonding, or binding, to give it stability; without





"THE ROAD THRO THE FOREST" FROM  
A WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY WILFRID BALL, R.E



WINTERBOURNE EARLS, WILTSHIRE

zontal courses, breaking through the main walling of flint, and an instance of this is shown in the cottage at Winterbourne Earls (page 22); while at Stratford-sub-Castle (page 19) bricks are set in a haphazard manner, indiscriminately placed. At Lower Woodford (page 23) the two methods are seen introduced into the same wall, a brick string course and an eaves course intersecting the stone and flintwork.

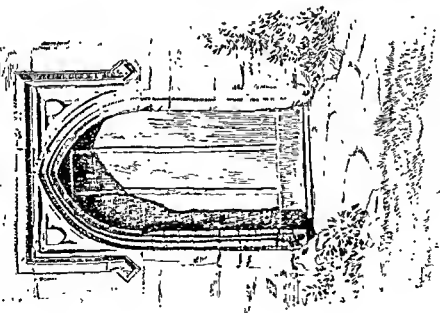
The conscious results of this combination of materials are great in variety and successful in effect. An extraordinary appreciation and realization of surface, decoration and texture is manifest. It was produced entirely by a common-sense use of material, acted and reacted upon by traditional ways and means. Some effects were carried to wonderful lengths—yet always within the limitations of the materials—and the black and white flints, shimmering with glancing light, and set around with the combining bricks or stone, suggest to the mind the brilliancy of a precious jewel.

Flint occurs in irregular nodular masses. It is broken up into small pieces which are dressed to a more or less even size. When freshly broken they are black in colour; some weather slowly, ultimately becoming bleached and white. Between the two extremes, black and white, this

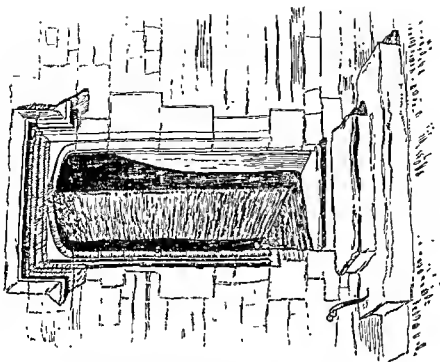
such strengthening it would not hold together. The difficulties imposed by the material were solved by the adoption of a most telling style of work. Instead of bonding the walls with large pieces of flint, as sometimes occurs, it was more usual to use stone or brick for the purpose. In the case of stone a squared block shows alternating with a square panel of flints, draught-board fashion, as may be seen in the example from Salisbury (page 20), and in the gable of the mill at Middle Woodford (page 21). Bricks, used as bonders, generally appear in hori-



TRENT, DORSETSHIRE

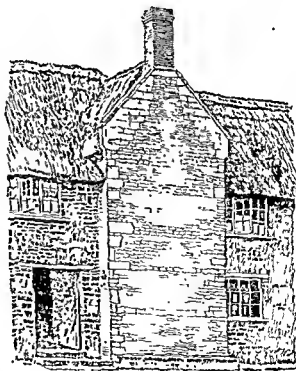


STOFORD, SOMERSETSHIRE

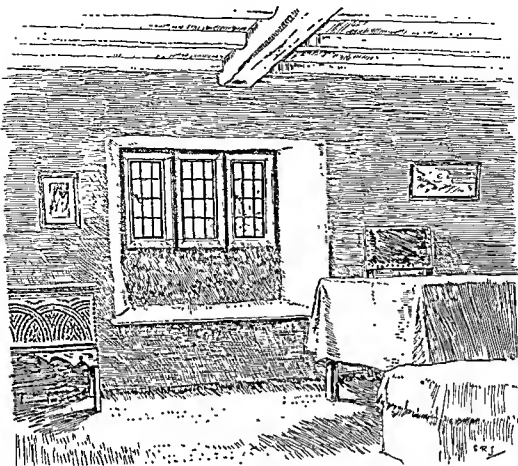


BRADFORD ABBAS, DORSETSHIRE

great artistic spirit and high manipulative skill, resulted. The mediæval days of monasticism witnessed the erection of noble piles, cathedrals, abbeys, priories, granges. Country churches of the Perpendicular period were of great beauty, marked pre-eminently by their rich and elaborately ornamented towers. The domestic work followed in the wake of the monumental, large houses being equally distinguished though simpler in character, and a corresponding influence is traceable in the smaller dwellings. The freestones of this district are numbered among the finest in England. They are all oolites and come from such famous quarries as Doulton, Bath, and Ham-hill. The ease with which the stone can be worked makes it peculiarly suitable for fine and rich effects. It encourages the growth of soft mosses and lichens, and its colour, when mellowed by age, is full of beauty. And so the geological conditions left their impress upon style. The excellence of the available material was largely responsible for the development of a school of masons whose fame spread far beyond the confines of their native locality, and whose skilful handiwork enriched important buildings. Cottage building, necessarily limited in its scope, acquired an importance and distinction which is admirably displayed in the stone-coped gables, ornamented kneelers and finials, arched doorways (page 27), and occasional fine bay-windows. The oolitic formation is bounded on the west by the liassic limestone, and consequently, towards mid-Somerset, walling shows more of the lias and less of the freestone. The strong, gabled projection at Nether Compton, Dorset, shown here, is finished with free-stone, but the irregularly coursed walls are of lias. Thatching, as a roof covering, was in many instances displaced by stone. And be it noted that, as the roofing slates were procured in larger sizes than obtain elsewhere, there is a subsequent reduction in the pitch of roofs; the extremely acute angles of,



NETHER COMPTON, DORSETSHIRE



SHERBORNE, DORSETSHIRE

for instance, the Cotswold roofs do not occur except where thatch was designed to be the covering.

Few building districts in England seem to have been more imbued with the mediæval spirit than Somerset and its borders. Ecclesiasticism swayed a great influence, and many evidences of its power still exist; place-names and buildings alike bear witness to it. The Gothic feeling, which was the inspiration of the earlier domestic buildings, had its prototype in the churches. And in post-Reformation days this influence continued; slowly, very slowly, it weakened, and early forms and methods continued to live on. In truth, the spirit of the west has always been conservative. John Wood, the architect of Bath, wrote in the eighteenth century, "And it was then only that the lever, the pulley, and the windlass were introduced among the artificers in the upper part of Somerset, before which time the masons made use of no other method to hoist up their heavy stones, than that of dragging them up with small ropes against the sides of a ladder."\*

\* Bath—British Association, 1888.

The early cottage buildings, then, frankly followed the later developments of the Gothic tradition and are marked by its characteristics. The walls were massively constructed and within their thickness window-seats were often introduced, such as is shown in the illustration from Sherborne in Dorset (page 29); the proportions of solids to voids were accurately considered, as were the relations of vertical to horizontal elements; asymmetry and contrast were the formulas relied upon for external effect, and the value of predominant



NETHER COMPTON, DORSETSHIRE

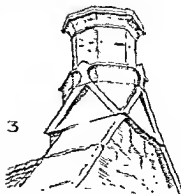


NETHER COMPTON, DORSETSHIRE

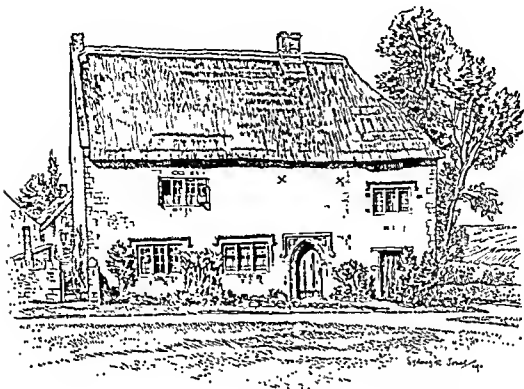
roofs and picturesque outlines was realised. Ornaments were kept within proper subjugation, not too rich, yet rich enough to enhance the composition as a whole; the crocketed gable at Nether Compton, Dorset, or the decorated chimney finishing the gable at Trent, Dorset (Nos. 2 and 3 on this page), add just the necessary interest and delicacy. Again, the interesting doorway at Stoford, in Somerset (page 31), arched, and surmounted by a square-headed label, the spandrels being occupied by shields, at once gives character to the whole structure. In passing, it may be noted that the original position of this doorway—that portion to the right hand is a later addition—is reminiscent of the entrance to the "screens" of a more important house. The "screens" was the passage-way, or lobby, formed by the

dividing partition which was placed near the end of the domestic hall of the Middle Ages.

Much of the internal arrangement of these earlier buildings is visible on the exterior, emphasised rather than cloaked. The staircase turret at Norton St. Philip, Somerset (page 39), for instance, with its narrow slits for lighting, leaves no doubt as to its purpose; and the positions of fire-places are frequently indicated by wide projecting masonry. Windows were inclined to be small, cusped at the heads, and divided into lights by mullions, as shown in the above-mentioned illustration. At Trent, in Dorsetshire (page 34), the space between



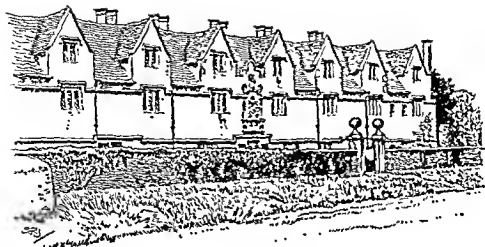
TRENT, DORSETSHIRE



STOFORD, SOMERSETSHIRE

the upper window-heads and label-moulding is decorated by sunk panelling worked in the stone. This same village gives another example of development in window construction, the introduction of the transom (page 36); this horizontal feature divides the lights of the four main windows. Bay-windows were employed during the Perpendicular period, though their use was chiefly confined to the larger houses. Two excellent examples may be seen at Norton St. Philip, in Somerset (page 35), boldly jutting out from the main wall, and cleverly finished at the angles with buttresses, obliquely placed. This house is interesting, inasmuch as it exhibits a form of construction uncommon to the neighbourhood; it will be observed that the upper stories, facing the road, are built of timber and plaster. Whether this work has been added at a subsequent date is by no means plain, and more probably it is an instance of the overlapping of methods. The chimneys, crowning either gable, have the characteristics of the typical Gothic arrangement; they are short in height and the shafts are pierced with apertures, serving as outlets for the smoke. Another not uncommon form is the slender octagonal shaft, rising from a square base, and terminated with projecting mouldings, as that at Trent (page 36).

Out of the Gothic was developed the customary building style of the countryside which continued on. Examples abound, quiet and restrained in treatment. Priestleigh (page 7) and Aldhampton (page 38) in Somerset, and Corsham, in Wiltshire (page 37), afford instances of the expression

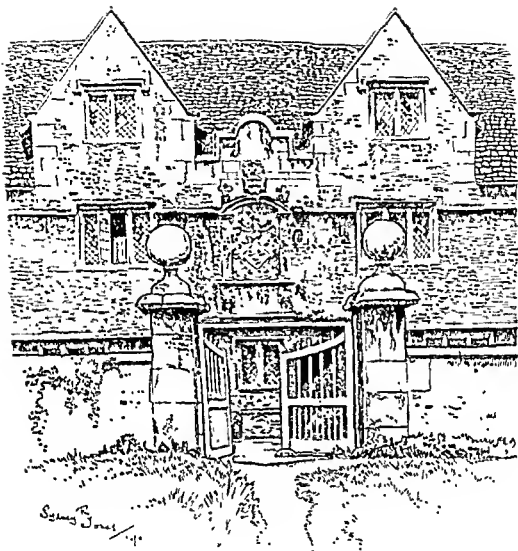


CORSHAM, WILTSHIRE

which obtained in Elizabethan days and for many years after. The four-centred, arched doorways of Tudor times, to be seen in the illustrations from Priestleigh and Aldhampton, were adhered to ; square heads displaced the cusping of the mullioned windows, the number of lights was increased, but the label moulding was retained ; gables and dormers were largely used. Materials were applied in an appropriate way, and through all the work this sympathetic treatment is always present. The little stone-tiled hood at Trent (page 25) is as much the legitimate result of available material as is the doorway it protects.

In later days, when the Renaissance was firmly established in England, its influence penetrated into remote places ; the new fashion and the old order developed simultaneously side by side. The range of buildings at Corsham, in Wiltshire (on this page), erected in 1663, evince a more studied and deliberately considered disposition ; part is balanced by part, and the classic inspiration is evident in the details (opposite). The rise of Bath to importance during the eighteenth century gave great stimulus to building in the neighbourhood, and many houses were erected, depending upon an Italian ideal for inspiration. But to the towns this influence was chiefly confined, and it is remarkable how little effect the new language of expression in architecture had upon rural cottage building. In the heart of Somerset, and away from the zone of the towns, the village masons, forgetful that the old order changeth, laid stone upon stone, created their patterns, and drew their ideas from the old-time sources, just as did their fathers before them.

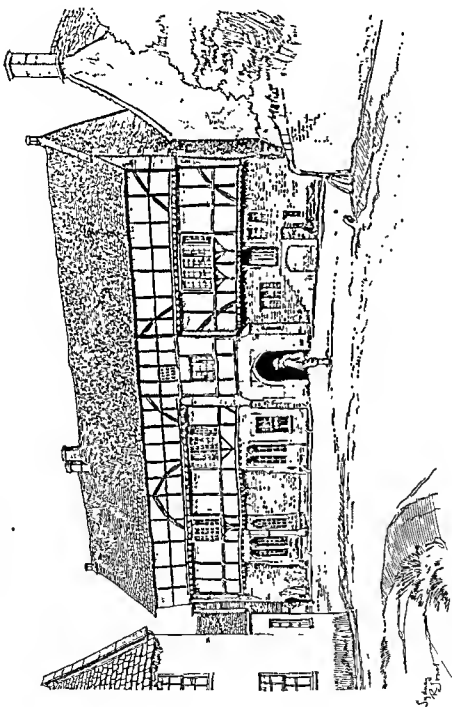




CORSHAM, WILTSHIRE



TRENT, DORSETSHIRE



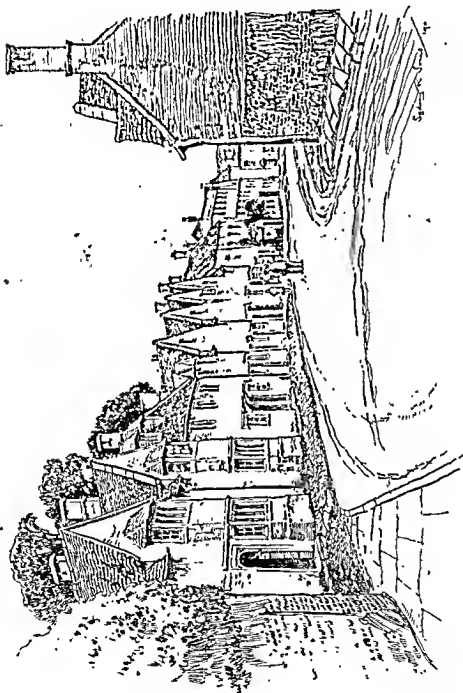
NORTON ST. PHILIP, SOMERSETSHIRE



TRENT, DORSETSHIRE



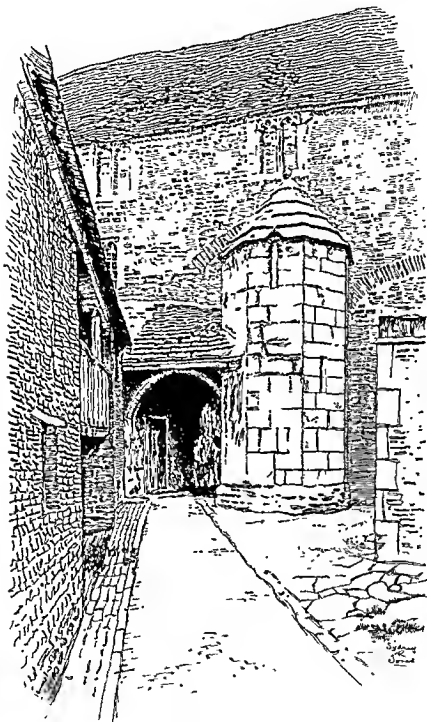
'ON THE EDGE OF THE WOOD' FROM A  
WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY WILFRID BALL. R.E.



CORSHAM, WILTSHIRE



ALDHAMPTON, SOMERSETSHIRE.



NORTON ST. PHILIP, SOMERSETSHIRE





DIVISION II.

BRICKWORK, FLINTWORK,  
TIMBERWORK AND PLASTER-  
WORK IN BERKSHIRE AND  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

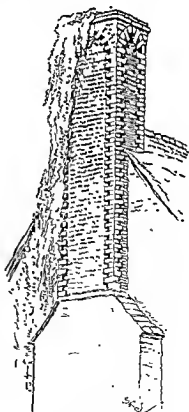
## II.—BRICKWORK, FLINTWORK, TIMBERWORK AND PLASTERWORK IN BERKSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.



RENAISSANCE architecture, tracing its origin to the great revival in intellectual thought that began in Italy during the fifteenth century, was introduced to this country in the early years of the century following. First its influence was little felt; then a period of transition followed; and finally it became the dominant marking force of those buildings which were the result of conscious effort and deliberate consideration. But, great as the in-

fluence of the Renaissance truly was, it did little, as has already been shown, to materially stem the tide of the inherited building traditions of the countryside. Particularly in the districts producing stone did the old ways prevail—in moorland cottages or hillside villages far away from spheres of active progress. Around London, however, in those parts accessible to, and within the dominion of the metropolis, there is frequently traceable in the cottages a very distinct feeling for the newer development; it is seen alike in Kent and Surrey, in Berkshire and in Buckinghamshire. Not that the old character was abandoned; much was retained, but to it was added the local interpretation of the more recent style. Both were contemporaneous, but so well fused and blended together that the resulting compromise often shows much originality and charm.

In cottage building the Renaissance asserted itself chiefly in the details and ornaments. Sash windows appeared, and door and window-heads of jointed bricks were commonly employed. The dormers were not developed upwards from the main walls, but became picturesque and isolated features of the roof. Often roofs were hipped, and beneath the eaves a cornice projected, sometimes consisting of a series of horizontal classic mouldings, sometimes carried out in simple and well-arranged brickwork. Chimneys were rectangular in form and terminated with plain capping, as shown here. The adoption of these



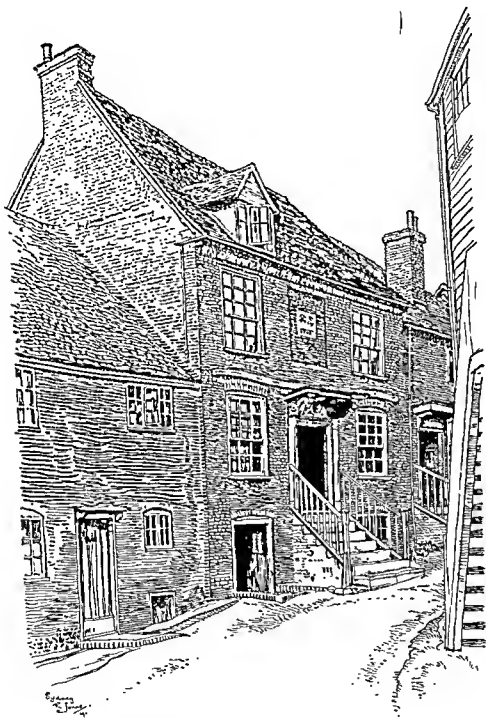
WEST WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



DOWNLEY, Buckinghamshire

general forms tended to weaken that strong individuality inherited from the Middle Ages. Work was done more by rote than impulse, and a more or less inevitable common type resulted. But in this work there is revealed again and again evidence of the continual influence of tradition; especially in the right usage of materials, and the appreciation of their legitimate possibilities, the village builders proved their knowledge, long after the exponents of the fashionable style had forgotten, if they had ever learned, the lesson. The brick chimney at West Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire (page 43), is quite honest in its purpose and construction, and is decorated in a straightforward manner suggested by the material, alternate headers and stretchers projecting from the surfaces of the shaft. In general form it observes the early tradition, wide at the base and standing out from the main wall, giving a sense of strength to the gable end; but the decoration at the angles, arranged pilaster-wise and arched at the head, betrayed a new motive. The West Wycombe example (page 45), dated 1722, shows the style considerably developed, much more than became usual in general cottage building. The symmetrical disposition of the whole, the projecting cornice, the doorway, centrally placed and surmounted by a winged head, the door-hood, delicately moulded and supported by carved brackets, the plain band of brickwork as a string course, all these features complied with the prevailing taste of the time.

In the southern parts of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire flint, being readily available, largely entered into the construction of the walling. Combined with brick, the materials were thus similar to those used in Wiltshire, but the tendency for horizontal proportions, to be observed in this latter county, is displaced by a feeling for vertical lines. The work is less playful and lacks imaginative treatment. The cottages at Downley,

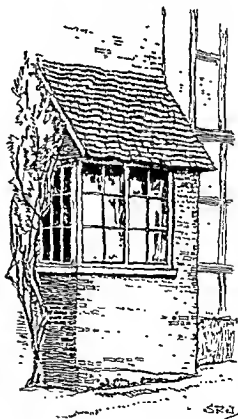


WEST WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

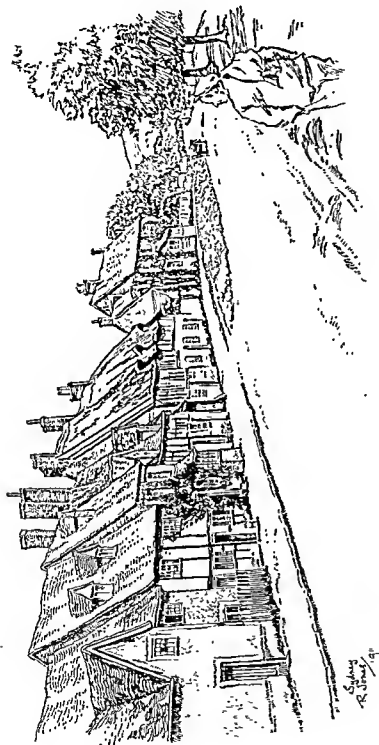
in Buckinghamshire (page 44), simple and reasonable though they be, have not that power to delight the eye which is the prerogative of the buildings neighbouring the Plain. Indeed, this change of treatment with change of locality is continually appearing in rural architecture, and the effects of local personality and peculiarity are always being seen. Compare the Kentish type of timbered house with that of Cheshire, or the stone dwellings of Dorset with the cottages on the Yorkshire coast. Equivalent materials were used in both instances, oak corresponding with oak and stone with stone. But dissimilar ideas were underlying, which found expression, and affected outward form; what is severe in one place is fanciful in another; here is innovation, there conservatism; or restraint gives way to lively conceits.

Around High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, the flints were often arranged in large panels, measuring in some cases as much as nine feet wide. The height of these panels was generally greater than the width and they were bounded on all sides by brickwork, horizontal bands at the bases and heads, and vertical combinations of headers and stretchers at the sides. Such flint walls that were not divided into panels in this wise were merely protected at the external angles and openings with brickwork, and show no other extraneous material or divisions; the two examples from Downley (pages 44 and 54) furnish instances and illustrate the particular brick finish given to doors, windows and quoins.

In both Berkshire and Buckinghamshire timber was used in the framing of buildings at a period anterior to, and during the early decades of the Renaissance. The system of construction generally adopted throughout England was followed, and the method has been excellently explained by the late Mr. E. A. Ould in "Old Cottages in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Cheshire." All the distinguishing characteristics are to be seen; the low wall at the base, more often of stone than of brick, the massive angle-posts and upright timbers, the projecting joists at the first floor level, and the oak pins. At West Wycombe (page 49), the outer ends



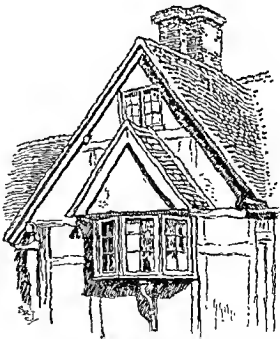
WENDOVER, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE





UPTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

of the floor joists are covered by a moulded fascia-board; and the delicately-curved brackets, which give support to the overhanging story, are worthy of note. The woodwork of the half-timbered buildings in these two counties is not marked by special singularities or uncommon features. The general good effect, which is always the property of this constructive principle, is present. The work is customary, and no essential difference exists between it and that which may be found in many other districts where timber was easily obtained. The illustration from Sonning, in Berkshire (page 53), shows an example of simple timbering, solid in appearance, and handled in a direct way; while at Wendover, in Buckinghamshire (page 47), the same quiet and satisfying



\* WEST WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE





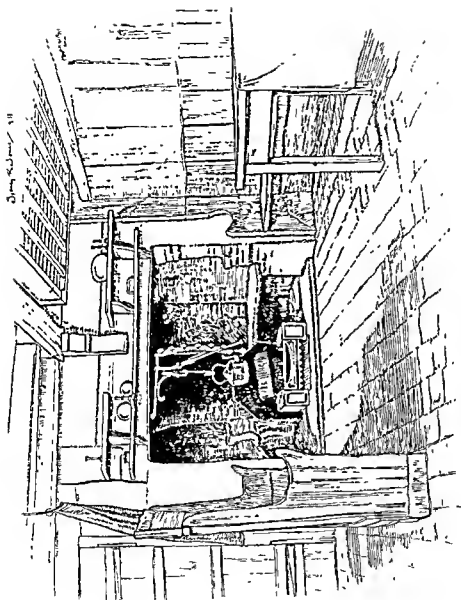
WEST WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



LITTLE WITTENHAM, BERKSHIRE

effect may be seen. The gables and dormers of the former illustration are continuous from the main wall, and have similar exposed framework; in this respect they follow traditional forms. At Wendover, however, roof lines are unbroken at eaves and ridge, and the dormers are appendages of the roof, clearly denoting a later development. The brick bay window with corner lighting, shown in detail on page 46, is a pleasing feature. The oriel window in the gable at West Wycombe (page 48) is another instance of picturesque value resulting from workmanlike method.

It is not unusual to find the spaces between the timbers filled with brickwork, called brick-nogging. It occurs in the walls and overhanging gables at East Hendred, in Berkshire (page 55), and at Dinton, in Buckinghamshire (page 58). In each case the brickwork is arranged herring-bone fashion, a plan more commonly adopted in the eastern than in the western counties. But while at East Hendred the timbers crowd closely upon each other, and the intervening panels are narrow and long, the width of the panels at Dinton is little less than the height. In timber-framed buildings it was no doubt originally the custom to fill the interstices with wattle and daub, and it is evident that, as time went on and bricks became available they were often used for the infilling. It has sometimes been questioned why these two materials should have been used in conjunction, why, with the advent of bricks, timbers were retained. This combination was greatly



EAST HENDRED, BERKSHIRE

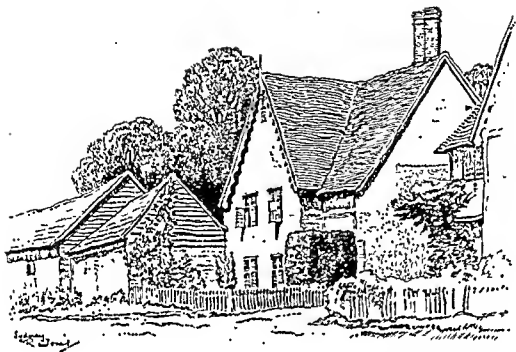
a result of adhesion to custom. Timber-building, old-established in practice, was not quickly superseded, and continued long after brickwork became a constituent part of the structures. Economy, also, was a probable factor; oak, plentiful and handy, would be cheaper than bricks. And so, for a period, both were used, side by side. The discontinuance of half-timber building was due to a number of causes, the chief of which was the growing scarcity of oak in the seventeenth century. Brick-making at that date had been developed, and was attended by a consequent cheapness of production. These conditions reacted upon each other; brick-building, which was not reliant upon a subsidiary material for its development, in a great measure superseded wooden-framed cottage building, which gradually fell into disuse.

The structural frame-work, so boldly exposed on the exterior of half-timbered buildings, had its counterpart within. The undersides of the floors, with their arrangement of beams and joists resting on the oaken wall-plates, were left visible. No more decorative ceiling effect, resulting from frank construction, has ever been evolved. Often the woodwork was merely roughly squared, such as may be seen at Little Wittenham, in Berkshire (page 50). The main beams were frequently decorated with a simple moulding, or with a stopped chamfer, as at East Hendred (page 51); the beam is here supported by a slightly projecting bracket. This interior shows the usual type of fireplace of the period, wide and deep enough to seat a group within its jambs, and with its accompaniments of an open-hearth, fire-back and chimney-crane, has the constituents of that mental picture—so often dearly treasured but so rarely materially realised—of the old chimney corner.

North of Berkshire, and centrally through Buckinghamshire, runs the chalk formation, continued without break from Wiltshire. Homely cottages, coated with plaster, abound at Childrey (page 54), and East Hendred (pages 56 and 57),—charming Berkshire villages lying at the foot of the downs which bound the Vale of the White Horse on the south—at Upton, in Buckinghamshire (page 48), and in those old and pretty villages around Aylesbury. The finish of the cottage walls is generally of ochre colouring, pale or deep in strength, and whitewash is less customary. Decorated external plasterwork, or pargetting, is not infrequently seen. The devices take the form of lightly-recessed ornaments, simple in character; in some cases they extend over the entire surface of the walls, in others they only emphasise special features. Such a treatment exists at Abingdon, in Berkshire (page 60), where the sunk decoration of the panels, and the narrow bands dividing them, are white, and the remaining work is coloured yellow. Timber-framed buildings were often plastered over, and the thinness of the superimposed material permits the partial disclosure of the original woodwork. At Stevenon, in Berkshire (page 59), there is an example of this, and the protecting plaster, covering the sunlit cottage at Dinton, in Buckinghamshire (page 58), has done much to preserve the ancient oaken structure.



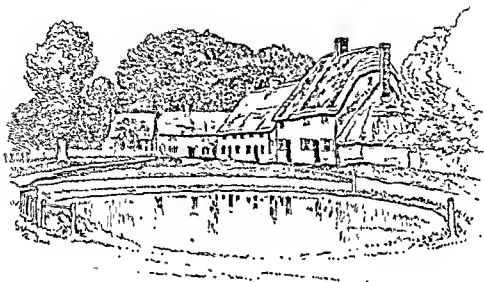
A SOUTHERN HOMESTEAD FROM A  
WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY WILFRID BALL, R.E.



DINTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



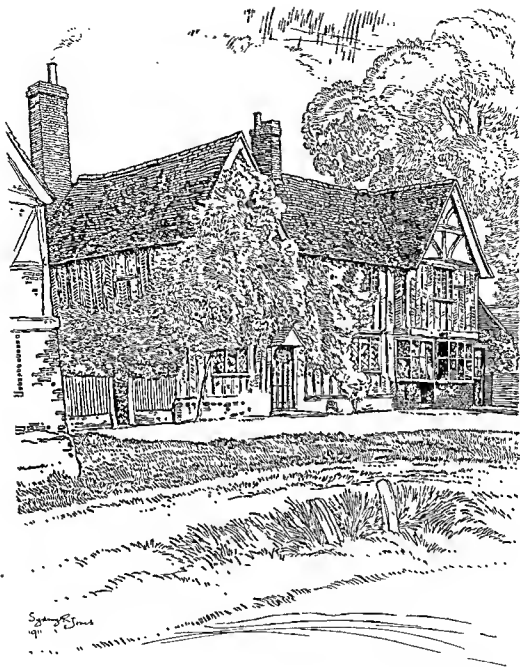
SONNING, BERKSHIRE



CHILDREY, BERKSHIRE



DOWNLEY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



EAST HENDRED, BERKSHIRE





EAST HENDRED, BERKSHIRE

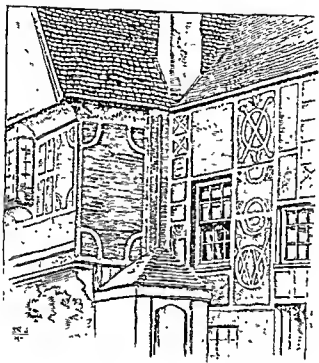
EAST HENDRED, BERKSHIRE





DINTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE





ABINGDON, BERKSHIRE

DIVISION III

STONWORK IN THE EASTERN  
COTSWOLDS

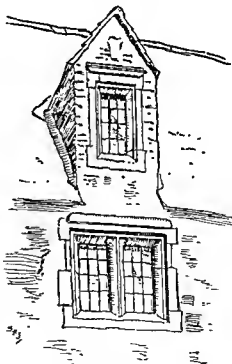
### III.—STONEWORK IN THE EASTERN COTSWOLDS.



HOSE buildings commonly known as the Cotswold group are not strictly confined to the geographical area from which they take their name. The hills proper, giving the designation, rise steeply from the Severn valley and are mostly confined to the county of Gloucestershire. But stretching far away eastwards, through Oxfordshire, through Northamptonshire, and into Rutlandshire, the face of the country is broken and hilly; it is diversified by

high-lying plains and tracts of woodland. From end to end of these low hills extends the broad bed of stone that gives distinction to the buildings lying along its course. In bygone days the oolite and lias was worked from innumerable local quarries, and whether a village community was engaged in the erection of a church, a house, or a barn, it would seek no farther than the nearest quarry for a supply of material.

Architectural styles have often been developed, changed, or abandoned through causes outside and independent of them. The Cotswold building tradition seems to have been so affected. The particular excellence of it was indirectly partly due to England's oldest industry, the production of wool. Sheep-rearing for profit was established shortly after the Norman Conquest, and soon became a flourishing and lucrative occupation. Such success attended the wool trade that English fleeces were sought by foreign merchants and distributed by them through Europe. It ultimately came to pass that the principal supply for the continent was drawn from England. During the reigns of the early Edwards, Flemish artisans settled in this country and under their direction rose the home woollen manufacture. This, in turn, developed as successfully as the unconverted wool trade had done; it attained such dimensions that the exportation of the raw product was prohibited in the reign of Elizabeth. The light soils and hills of the Cotswold country were particularly suited to sheep-farming, and for centuries flocks of great magnitude



GRETTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



UPPINGHAM, RUTLAND

grazed on the wolds. Their produce contributed to the national prosperity, and the consequent influx of wealth to the district must have had an important bearing on village life and on the architecture. Splendid churches and houses were erected, and cottages of more than ordinary merit came into being.

The stone yielded is not uniform in character all along the formation. Geologically the same product, the layers of the strata differ greatly in thickness. The building stones procurable are therefore dissimilar in size. The manner of walling in the old work was prescribed by the nature of the near quarry. Masonry was of ashlar—carefully dressed and neatly fitted together,—of coursed rubble, or of random rubble. Often, as at Mollington, in Oxfordshire (page 65), the stones were roughly squared and laid in regular courses of varying depth, the largest being towards the base. This customary practice, of gradually diminishing the sizes of the blocks upward from the ground, was a sound maxim to act upon; for the weighty nature of the lower work imparted a sense of fixed solidity to the foundation, and, contrasting with the smaller upper stones, gave an appearance of lightness and height to the superstructure. Rubble walls—by which is meant walls constructed of rough stones irregular both in shape and size—were protected at the angles with dressed stonework; the cottage at Claydon, in Oxfordshire (page 73), has such freestone quoins. In the county of

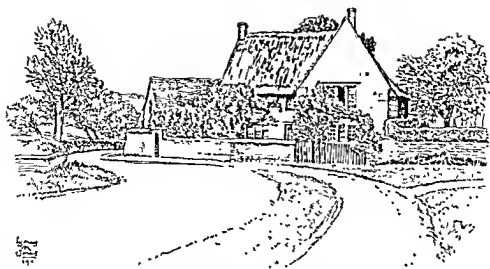




HORLEY, OXFORDSHIRE FROM A PEN AND  
WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY SYDNEY R. JONES



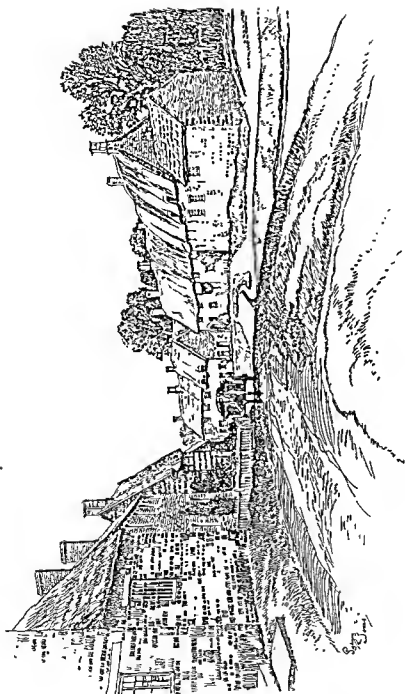
MOLLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE



SUTTON BASSETT, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



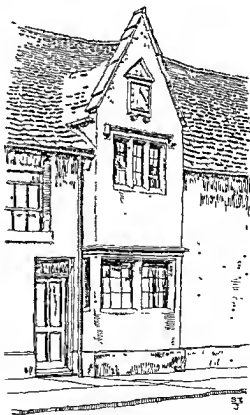
THORPE-BY-WATER, RUTLAND



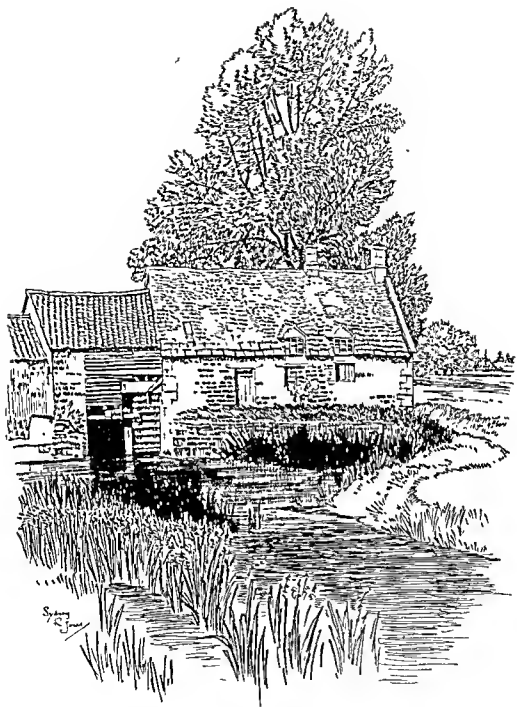
MORTON PINKNEY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Northamptonshire ironstone is found. Red in colour, it contrasts with the cool and mellow tints of the oolite, and a pleasing surface variety results where the two are seen used in conjunction. Throughout the shire these materials were more or less so employed. Morton Pinkney, in Northamptonshire (page 67), and Lyddington, in Rutland (opposite), furnish instances of ironstone introduced in walling without definite design isolated pieces or short courses showing dark against the paler surrounding masonry. But ordinarily the builders attempted a deliberate scheme of decoration, obviously considered, and acceding to exact limitation. A system was adopted in which light and red stone ran in alternate horizontal bands. The bands were not even in depth nor necessarily of one course only; two or three courses of the one kind of stone may be found abutting on a single course of the other. Typical illustrations of this parti-coloured Northamptonshire masonry are shown in the two drawings from Wilbarston (pages 9 and 71).

Cotswold villages have a character all their own and are not quite comparable to any other group. The native stone, used within its natural borders, contributes not a little to their captivating beauty. Nestling in the folds of the hills, or, as at Horley (opposite page 64), rising upwards to the higher lands, they delight the eye. Imagination pictures that it was a kindly spirit gave them birth, in spacious times when grace and tranquillity had a place in the daily round. A moral feeling seems to pervade, which gives an impression to the mind not soon forgotten. The charm of these venerable and grey villages is no mere matter of passing moment; their praises, so often sung by distinguished writers, have not been overstated. Many an inspiration for what we now term town or suburb planning may be seen, unconscious arrangements which slowly grew together and adapted themselves to hill and dale. Open spaces and sheltered greens; lanes and by-ways commanding pleasant vistas; simple and harmonious architecture; such



UPPINGHAM, RUTLAND

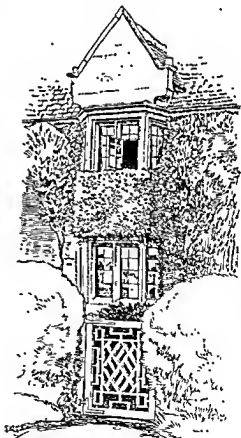


LYDDINGTON, RUTLAND

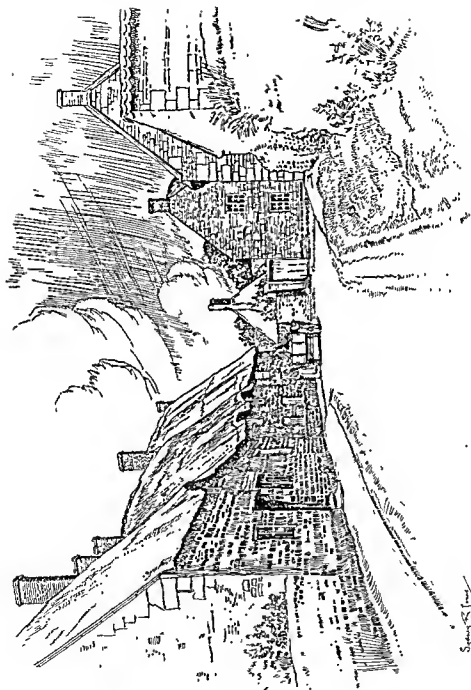
essentials were delicately adjusted one to another in proper relation and with quiet dignity.

The architecture of the Cotswolds is charged with life and individuality, and is distinguished by excellent craftsmanship. It was developed out of the local stone, a material susceptible to many possibilities, and suited alike to all the elements of the buildings. Though some few examples are earlier in date, the established tradition arrived at maturity in the days of Elizabeth; so firmly rooted did it become that it survived in remote parts until comparatively recent times. Not infrequently the work is dated. The occupier's initials and the year—carved in a small panel—appear in a gable, above a doorway, or in some such conspicuous place. Even in these small details certain provincialisms are to be observed. To the westward—that is, in Oxfordshire and on the Northamptonshire border—the lettering and dates are usually contained within a rectangular space framed by simple mouldings (page 72, Nos. 1 and 2); but in Rutland the distinguishing marks are exhibited on a lozenge raised from the face of the stonework as, for example, at Thorpeby-Water and Lyddington (page 72, Nos. 3 and 5). Judging by the dates carved upon them, the fashion of inserting such panels into cottage walls was not prevalent earlier than the seventeenth century.

The gable is a prominent feature throughout the district. Its use was universal. The pitch is steep and the angle at the apex is more acute than a right angle. Many are protected from the weather by stone coping, and crowned at the head with a finial. The illustration from Claydon (page 73) demonstrates the introduction of kneelers at the two lower corners. At Sutton Bassett, in Northamptonshire (page 66), the gable rises up from the front wall, but it was not unusual to build cottages with their gable-ends to the road, in the manner shown at Lyddington, in Rutland (page 75). Allied to the gable is the dormer, and it almost as frequently exists.



STOWE-NINE-CHURCHES  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE





Literally it is a window in a roof, placed in a small gable of its own. At Gretton, in Northamptonshire (page 63), it so appears, with a dripstone at the head. A more advanced development is to be seen at Uppingham, in Rutland (page 68). Here a square bay is carried up above the eaves and finished dormer-wise; it is capped with a projecting coping, and a sundial ornaments the space above the window. Again, at Stowe-Nine-Churches, in Northamptonshire (page 70), the polygonal bay shows the dormer treatment; but whereas at Uppingham the higher window is partly in the roof, the window in this instance stops at the roof level. The way in which the corbels have been introduced above the side lights should be noticed, and how thereby the face of the gabled has been brought into one plane.

Windows were flat at the head and, when constructed of stone, were divided into lights by mullions. The label, which was placed over them, is shown in many of the drawings. It may be square-headed, following the form of the window, or it may appear as a single horizontal moulding, simple in section and not returned at the extremities. Fine bay-windows greatly enhanced many successful effects of grouping. They were used with discrimination, and carefully disposed; wall-spaces were nicely broken by their projection, and distinction added to the complete composition. At Uppingham, in Rutland (page 64), two bay-windows are seen symmetrically placed at each side of the doorway. But this balanced order was uncommon,

and it was usual to add bay-windows singly, as at Uppingham and Stowe-Nine-Churches mentioned above. Occasionally they project in rectangular form from the front of the building, in the way shown at Mollington, in Oxfordshire (page 82); generally, however, they come obliquely outwards. The Caldecott bay (page 76), with the face of its upper compartment gradually increasing in width, is of the local type that subsists in the neighbourhood of Rutland. A semi-circular, or bow-window, is illustrated from Lower Boddington, in Northamptonshire (page 74). Built of wood upon a low stone base, it is obviously later in date than the foregoing; in fact this feature is primarily associated with the eighteenth century.

The four-centred depressed arch of Tudor times, surrounded by a rectangular moulded frame, survived in many stone cottage



DATE PANELS



CLAYDON, OXFORDSHIRE

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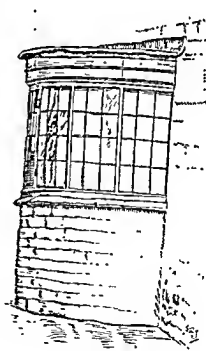
The four-centred depressed arch of Tudor times, surrounded by a rectangular moulded frame, survived in many stone cottage



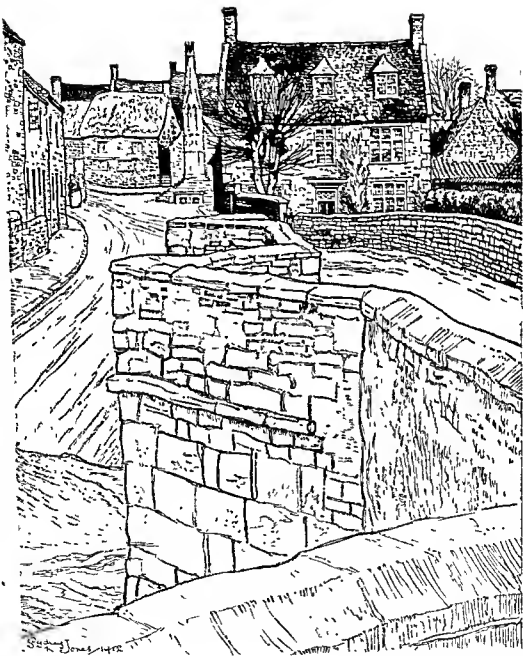
DATE PANELS



doorways. Those at Caldecott, in Rutland (page 77), and at Great Bourton, in Oxfordshire (pages 78 and 79), are representations of the olden method. In both the latter examples the original oak door has been retained; each is divided into panels by applied fillets, and studded with large nail-heads. The labels of the doorways harmonise with those of the windows, and are sometimes emphasised by a more lavish treatment. At Great Bourton (page 78), the horizontal returns are beautifully decorated at their termination. Doorways, indeed, were given importance and were regarded as worthy objects upon which to bestow the best craftsmanship. The dressed stone chimney on the gable end at Thorpe-by-Water, in Rutland (page 66), delicately adorned with classic mouldings, is of a type which, with variations, was adopted throughout the Cotswolds. Such general forms of detail were accepted, and continually recur. Individuality played upon a sure and firmly-rooted background, evolved by time and practice. There was concord in the choice and allocation of parts, an understanding of possibility, of harmonious relationship. Thus it is revealed how a great tradition was built up that deservedly takes rank as a masterpiece of English style. New methods can be detected in some of the later buildings, faintly reflecting the classic influence that became the guiding fashion of stately architectural design. Mostly in the details the changes are seen, as in the dormer at Ashley, Northamptonshire (page 80), which is a distinct feature of the roof. The house at the end of the bridge, shown in the coloured drawing from Geddington, in Northamptonshire (opposite), in its dormers and wooden-framed windows heralds the change of style, while over the doorway appear a fanlight and projecting hood. At Upper Boddington, in the same county, is a complete little specimen of work moulded in the newer way (page 81); it is a homely rendering, sober in effect and not without a certain dignity. The arrangement, as a whole, has a considered aspect, and contrasts with the lively charm and playfulness of the earlier tradition. Sash windows have displaced the mullioned form, the quoins are raised, the mouldings have a classic profile. But the windows are not evenly disposed, and there is a licence of treatment shown in many minor directions. The old feeling had not disappeared; it lived on clothed in fresher garb, owning freedom and not exactness.



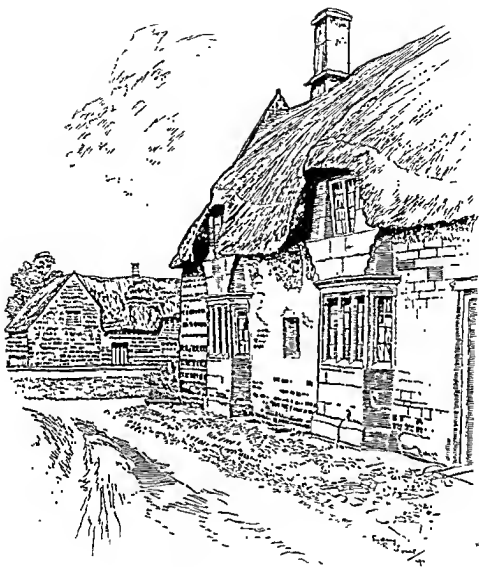
LOWER BODDINGTON  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



GEDDINGTON NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. FROM A PEN  
AND WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY SYDNEY R JONES

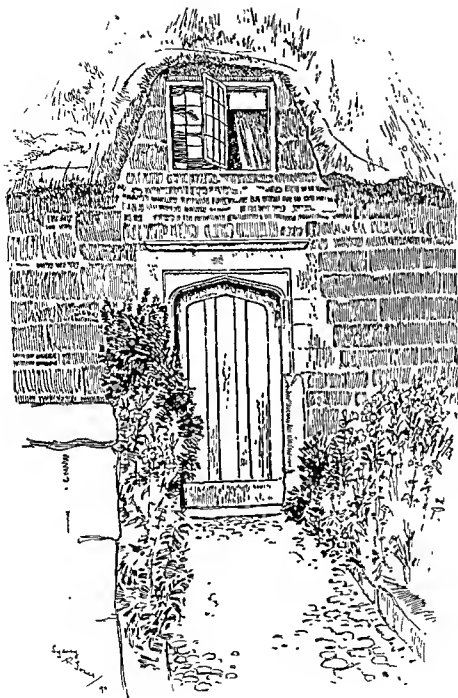


LYDDINGTON, RUTLAND

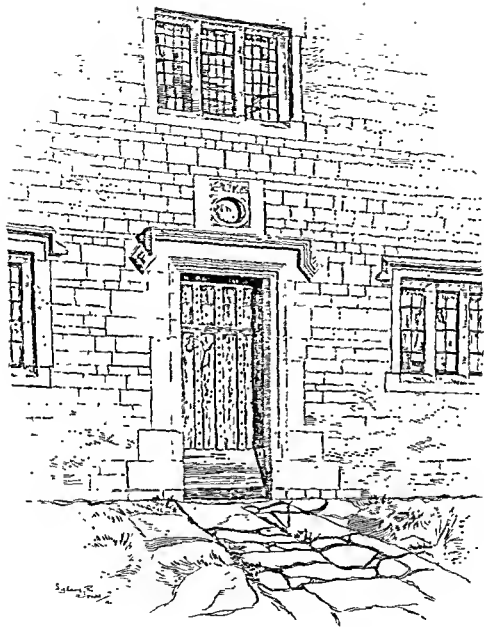


CALDECOTT, RUTLAND



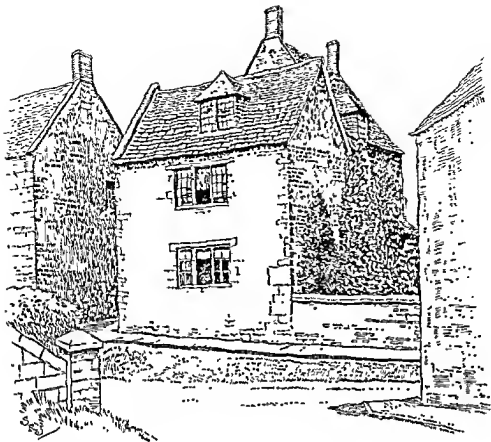


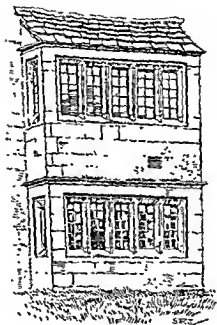
CALDECOTT, RUTLAND



GREAT BOURTON, OXFORDSHIRE







MOLLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE

DIVISION IV

PARGETTING, TIMBERWORK,  
BRICKWORK AND THATCHING  
IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES

## IV.—PARGETTING, TIMBERWORK, BRICKWORK AND THATCHING IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES.

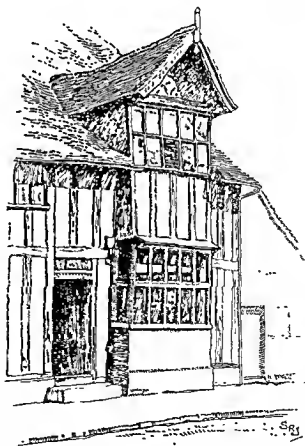


PLASTERING, as an art, was largely practised in the eastern counties of England. In its early form—known by the name of “wattle and dab”—plasterwork was used for the filling in of panels formed by the vertical and horizontal timbers of wooden-framed structures. It was made of interwoven hazel-rods and clay, and covered, both internally and externally, with a mixture of lime and sand. Such was the primitive method, and out of it grew the native school of plasterwork. The craft had attained considerable prominence by the end

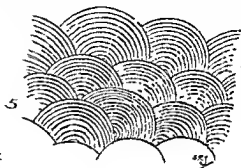
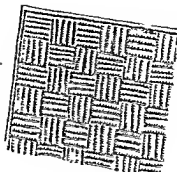
of the fifteenth century; it received great stimulus when Henry VIII. engaged Italian workmen who revealed the decorative possibilities of plaster.

Onward from that time plasterwork became the fashion. It was the principal feature of many buildings, confined not only to interior decoration but employed as ornamental treatment on the exterior. Reaching a full development in the seventeenth century, external plasterwork survived in out-of-the-way places well into the eighteenth.

How far the style of village work was affected by foreign influence—Italian or otherwise—it is difficult to estimate. It was of native growth, and if outside forces were assimilated, they merely brought a new development to that which had persisted for generations. The country plasterer would be slow to change, diffident to forsake the ways he had inherited. This desire on the part of



SUDBURY, SUFFOLK

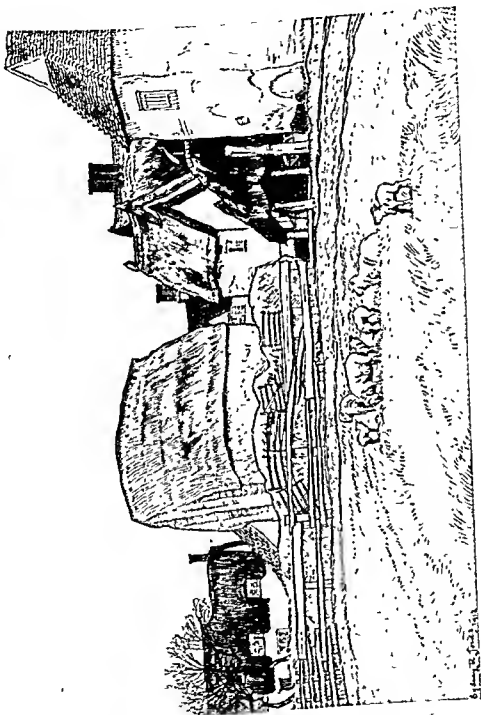


DETAILS OF EXTERNAL PLASTERWORK

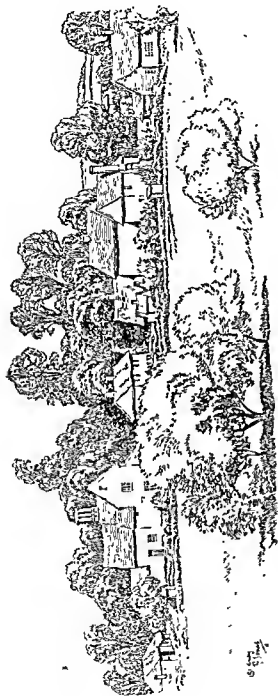
the worker to cling to accepted methods, his opposition to innovation, at his slowness to adopt new forms, runs through all old traditions of humble building effort, and must not be overlooked when the consideration of judgment of such work is the object. In this it differed from those efforts of greater pretension which were based on the deliberate styles of trained architectural schools, always susceptible to the ebb and flow of changing fashion. Particularly in plasterwork is demonstrated how permanent and fixed local practice may become. Certain peculiarities are often confined to very small areas, they occur again and again within circumscribed limits; but beyond the confines of the little districts they are displaced by other distinguishing marks. It is evident that old patterns were perfected and used in the region of their origin, and were transmitted from father to son. Although plaster is not the exclusive building product of the eastern counties, it is there most in evidence. The country is generally level, relieved here and there by easy prominences. Big rolling skies sweep over low landscapes, divided by bright patches of pasture or fine corn-lands. Very fitting are the little white villages, with red-tiled or thatched roofs, and sheltered by high trees. Such is Great Bartlow, in Cambridgeshire (opposite), typical of many villages that abound. The material used for the covering of cottage walls came to be known by the name of "parge," and the art of applying it was called "pargetting." The units of the composition are stated by Mr. George Bankart\* to have been "ordinary lime and sand and hair. This material, which was similar to that now used for the parging of flues, contained a certain amount of cow-dung and road

\* "The Art of the Plasterer," George Bankart.

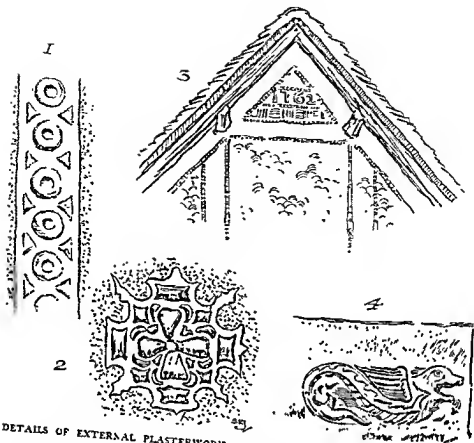




FULBOURNE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. FROM A PEN  
AND WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY SYDNEY R JONES



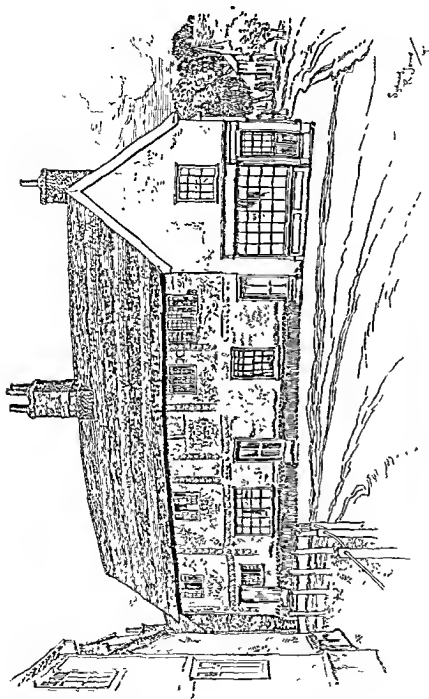
GREAT BARTLOW, CAMBRIDGESHIRE



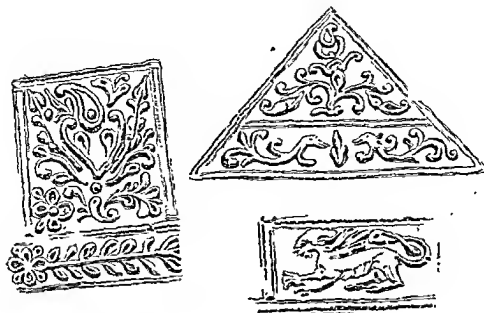
DETAILS OF EXTERNAL PLASTERWORK

scrapings, and became, as time went on, the decorative medium of the native *English Playsterer*." Chopped hay was sometimes substituted for hair, while a ruined cottage at Melbourn, Cambridgeshire, showed that straw had been added to the mixture.

Parge, simple and economic material though it was, gave scope for effective display. Its possibilities were appreciated and work full of variety ensued. Local plasterers plied their craft, knowing and using their material as old workmen were wont to do: fashioned it deftly, and applied their home-bred stamps and patterns in a sane, direct way. Especially applicable was pargetting to the cottage walls. Some were plain and unembellished, some rough-cast; while others were "pricked," panelled, recessed, or modelled in relief. Of simple plaster cottages, such as that at Melbourn (page 106), there are yet remaining a great number. It was not unusual to cover timber-framed houses with plaster in the manner shown at Stoke-by-Nayland (page 105), and Stoke-by-Clare, in Suffolk (page 103). The main structural timbers would generally be disclosed. Interesting is the angle-post of the former illustration, and the series of wooden shafts, crowned by Gothic caps from which spring the brackets that support the



CLARF, SUFFOLK

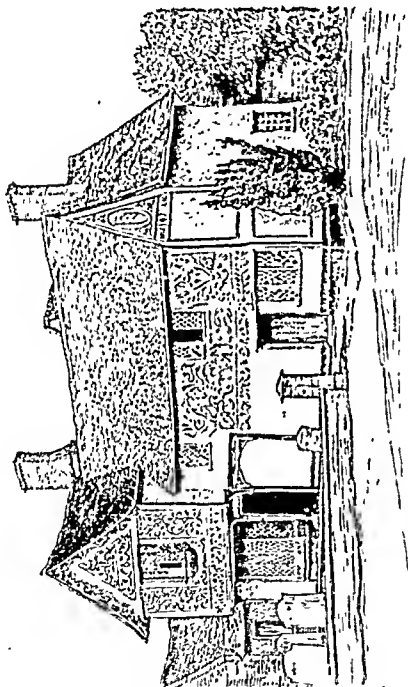


DETAILS OF EXTERNAL PLASTERWORK

oversailing story. The barge-board of the latter example has the guilloche pattern of Elizabethan and Jacobean times carved upon it. At Therfield, in Hertfordshire (page 99), the plastered cottage front of timber construction is partly covered by weather-boarding, a system more peculiar to the south than to the north of London.

Patterns in plaster show a number of forms and arrangements. The ground was laid with nice discrimination, varied in its surface and texture, and was not of the uniform, true dead level by which plastering is now characterised. Upon the moist ground tools were worked in an endless number of ways. Their application imparted diapered effects, unobtrusive in themselves, yet adding interest. Common are the pricked incisions—apparently done with a pointed stick—which often repeat over the entire wall space (page 86, No. 1). The “herring-bone” (page 86, No. 3) is another pattern that was much employed, evidently produced by an implement having one edge running in zigzag lines, as the illustration shows. This same tool appears responsible for the interchanging squares (page 86, No. 2) made by combining short vertical and horizontal lines. Flowing patterns (page 86, No. 4), scalloped fans (page 86, No. 5), and many other devices found a place in the medium of pargetting.

It not infrequently happens that the surfaces are divided into rectangular panels. Each panel will be bounded by a scratched moulding, low in relief and of simple section. Maybe the panels are diapered or pricked, in contrast to the plain dividing spaces, as at Little Hadham, in Hertfordshire (page 94); or both panels and surrounding frames will be devoid of relief. At Ashwell, in Hertfordshire (page 88, No. 3), the moulding is similar to bead enrichment, and the triangular panel, bearing the date,

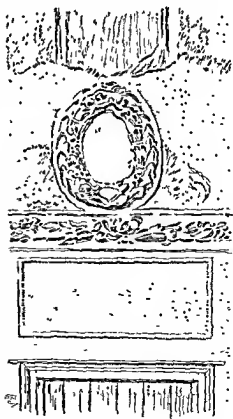


CLARY, SUFFOLK

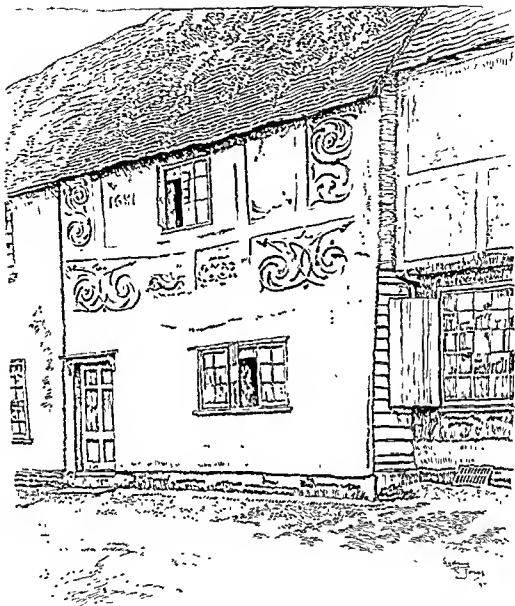
has the repeating square pattern. A certain number of buildings depend upon recessed designs for their added decoration, obtained in most instances by the application of wooden templates. In this wise were made the ornaments and borders on the cottages at Clare, in Suffolk (page 89); and a reference to the details numbered 1 and 2 on page 88 will show the shape of the sunk patterns which were formed by surrounding the templates with rough-cast.

Exterior ornamental modelling furnished a field for the expression of such flights of fancy as the East Anglian plasterer chose to indulge in. Here was room for free action. If his work was sometimes too ambitious, sometimes lacking in knowledge and refinement, it was spirited and always logically developed out of the material. The less elaborate specimens are the best; delicate running patterns, scroll work, or foliated representations inspired by the pleasant, natural surroundings in which the village worker spent his days. Many of these are excellent in every way, and betray skill and accomplishment on the part of the executant. Such is the decoration on the front of the example from Clare, in Suffolk (page 91).

It stands out in considerable relief, and the details on page 90 show how vigorously it was handled; the panels are divided by ovolo mouldings. At Ashwell, in Hertfordshire, is a cottage front dated 1681 (opposite), panelled, and ornamented with scroll designs and a rude representation of a dolphin, or some kindred monster (page 88, No. 4). The parge decoration at Saffron Walden, Essex (page 95), is on a large scale, and figures that exceed life-size enter into the scheme. The work belongs to the seventeenth century. There is much interesting modelling on the gables, as the drawings on page 97 demonstrate. The themes were mostly of natural origin, birds, fruit and flowers; while quoins and dividing bands were formed with templates and slightly project, as does the series of crossed arches beneath the window. To a late date in the development of plastering must be assigned the example from Little Chesterford, in Essex, appearing on this page. Classic feeling is evident, both in the disposition of the parts, and in the forms



DETAILS OF EXTERNAL PLASTERWORK



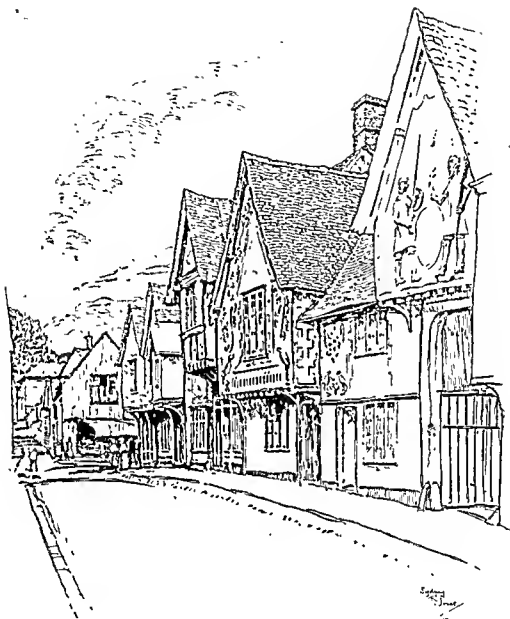




LITTLE HADHAM, HERTFORDSHIRE

of which they are composed. Pargetting, by reason of the material with which it was done, was essentially a homely art. But underlying all this modelled work there is traceable a certain freedom of thought. It was the outcome of the working of minds which, gaining power by contact, individually obeyed impulse, and were independent in their aim and endeavour.

Timber building in the eastern counties developed earlier than in the west. It is often rich and beautiful, of fine execution, and in the style of the Gothic tradition. Woodwork outside the range of the present subject shows how delicately wrought were the elaborate traceried windows, doorways, carved angle-posts, and barge-boards. The carving is analogous to sculptured stone and followed in the wake of contemporary masonry. The smaller buildings have a corresponding interest. In witness of this is the cusped barge-board at Clare (page 91) and the gable oriel, with its base carved out of one solid baulk. From the same example are the bay window, flanked on each side by engaged pillars, fashioned in the shape of buttresses, and the Tudor arched door-head, with carved spandrels, illustrated on page 96. The drawing from Sudbury, in Suffolk (page 85), shows a characteristic oak-framed window, while over the door is an enriched lintel. The window is divided into lights by mullions and has a horizontal crossbar, or transome. Throughout this district, where once great forests grew, are innumerable specimens of half-timbered cottages, built in the traditional manner that prospered in the countryside. Of these, Little Chesterford, in Essex (page 101), furnishes an instance; it is solid in appearance, honest in construction, and picturesque to look upon. A group at Stoke-by-Nayland, in Suffolk (page 104), is effectively broken up



SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX. (SEE PAGE 97)

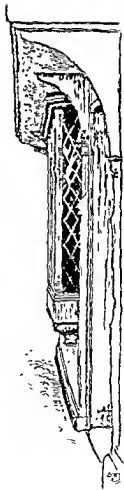


CLARE, SUFFOLK

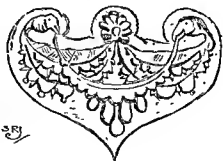
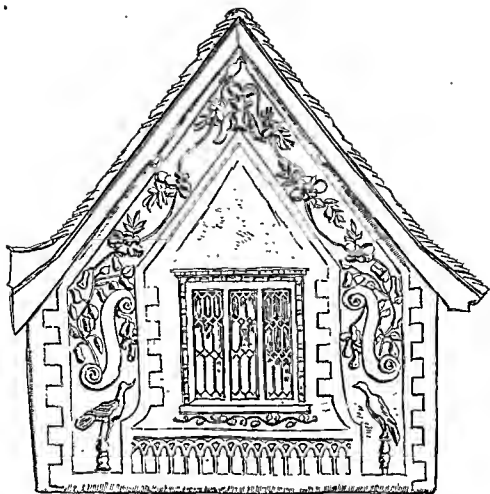
by irregularly placed gables, and dominated by a fine chimney-stack with clustered shafts. The upright timbers are set close together, and the framework is strengthened by diagonal braces.

Stone is not a common product of the eastern counties. It occurs in parts—for instance, in Cambridgeshire, which produces a hardened form of chalk called "clunch"—but generally over this area building stones are scarce. The absence of stone and the presence of good brick-earths brought about the development of brickwork. Many of the earliest English examples—other than those of Roman origin—are to be found in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.

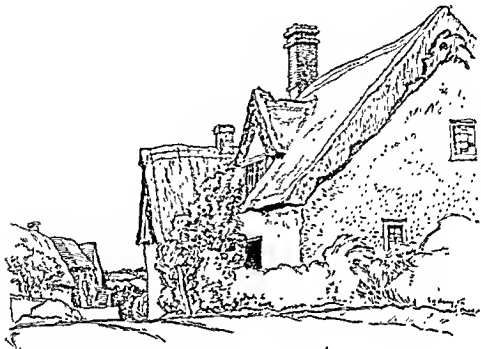
It was, however, in the erection of castles, old halls, and manor houses that this material was used, and no permanent brick building tradition for cottage work seems to have existed in early times. But after chimneys had become by custom and necessity established adjuncts to all types of dwelling—that is to say, in the sixteenth century—they were the special features of the cottages to which brickwork was almost invariably applied. They were treated as important items of the architectural groups, not suppressed, but emphasised. Upon them craftsmen lavished their best skill. Many noble shafts bear witness to their handiwork and power of design. Often several flues were grouped together in one great stack, while above the roof the single shafts appeared in clusters. Such chimneys may be seen in the drawings of Stoke-by-Nayland (page 105) and Melbourn (page 106), already mentioned. The shafts were shaped in various ways, rectangular, octagonal, circular; each might be entirely detached,



CLARE, SUFFOLK



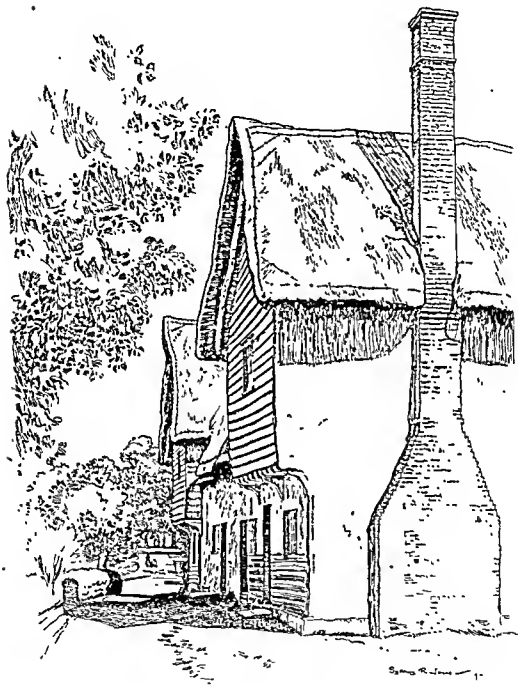
DETAILS OF EXTERNAL PLASTERWORK (SEE PAGE 95)



ASHEN, ESSEX

or partially so and connected by moulded bases and caps; some were all joined together without break. The examples from Newport, in Essex (page 102), are richly diapered with small face patterns, different on each shaft. The chimneys at Newton Green, in Suffolk (page 101), distinctly suggest the Continental influence which exercised a sway all along the eastern coast. The actual bricks then used were beautiful in themselves. Clay was weathered by long exposure, and the process of making by hand conduced to a pleasing variety in shape. They were burned in the old-fashioned way and were uneven in texture and colour. The proportions were good; old bricks were thin and rarely, if ever, exceeded two inches in depth. Mortar joints were flush with the face of the brickwork and were not often less than half-an-inch in width. The mortar was generally, though not always, light in colour and of excellent quality: so good, in fact, that it is often only with difficulty that old brickwork can be parted. Old chimneys, it is said, have been bodily moved from one place and re-erected in another, so firmly were they jointed together.

Roofs were occasionally made up with tiles of two or more colours, laid in shapes and patterns, or in parallel bands, as at Clare (page 89). The contrasts are never very decided and the colours always blend. But the thatched roofs are the glory of the district. Although there is in many parts of England no great difference existing between thatching, none can compare with that of the eastern counties. There it reached a state of perfection beyond which it is difficult to imagine. Thatching was an art, full of life

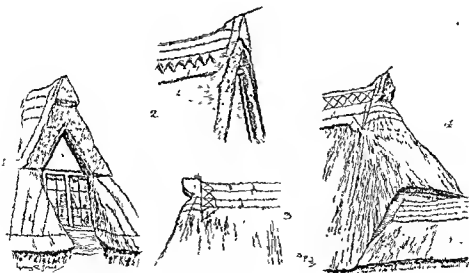


THERFIELD, HERTFORDSHIRE



TRUMPINGTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

and invention; the work was skilful and sure. All sorts of arrangements of hazel rods were interwoven and crossed. The thatch was cut back in patterns, elaborated at the ridges, and projected at the points of gables. The details from Cambridgeshire shown on this page are characteristic. Deep covered dormers, exemplified by the drawings of Trumpington, Cambridgeshire (above), and Ashen, Essex (page 98), are prevalent and always pleasing to the eye. There is, indeed, a quality possessed by thatch peculiar to itself. It has colour and beauty, and nothing more harmonious, more satisfying in effect, has ever formed the roofs of England's village dwellings.

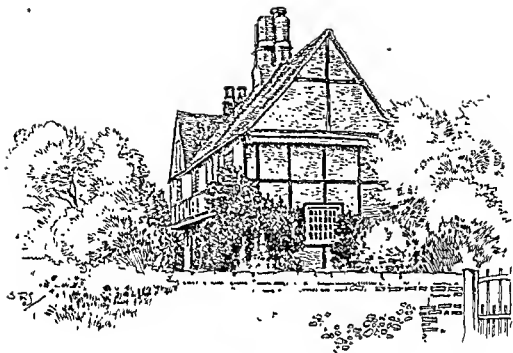


DETAILS OF THATCHING FROM CAMBRIDGESHIRE



"AMONG THE WOODED HILLS" FROM A  
WATER COLOUR DRAWING BY WILFRID BALL R.E.



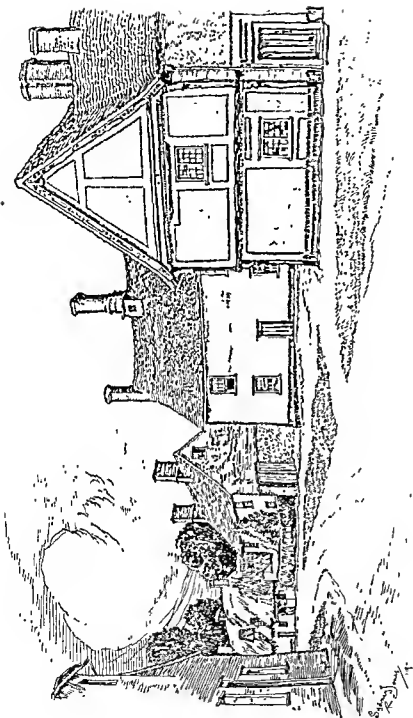


NEWTON GREEN, SUFFOLK

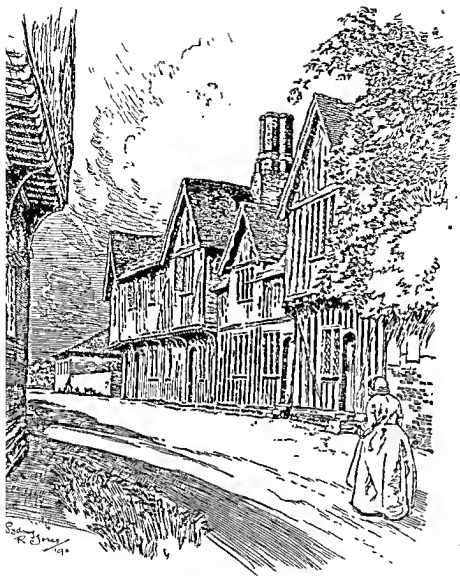


LITTLE CHESTERFORD, ESSEX

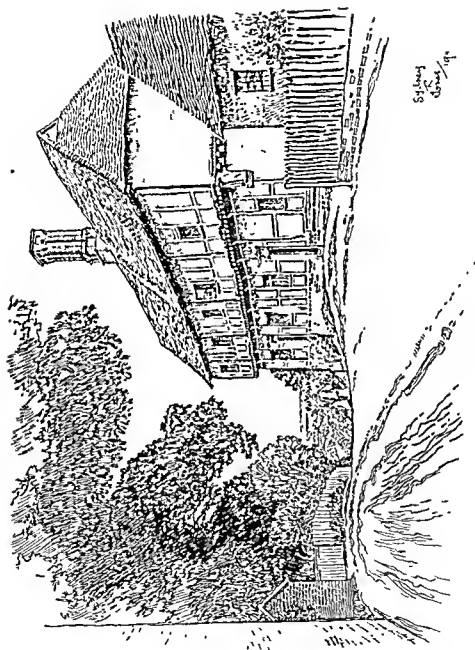




STOKE-BY-CLARE, SUFFOLK

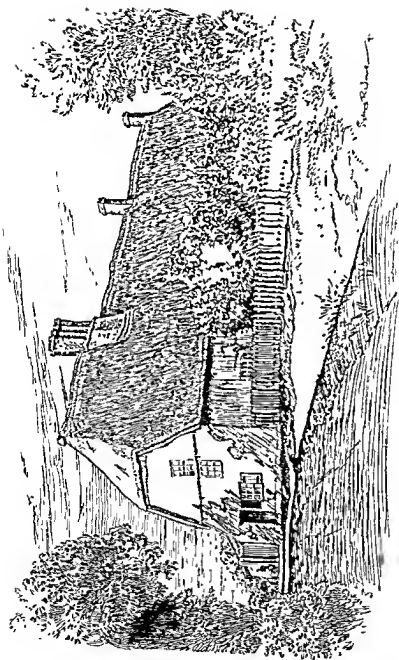


E-BY-NAYLAND, SUFFOLK



Sylvest  
*Wm. 1900*

STOKE-BY-NAYLAND, SUFFOLK



• MFLTOWN, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

DIVISION V

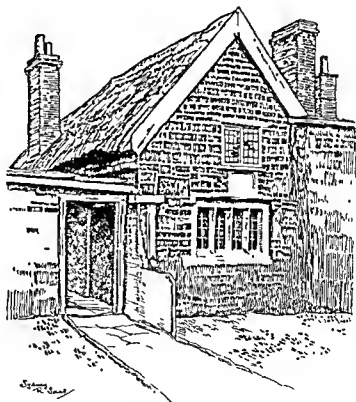
NORTHERN MASONRY AND  
BRICKWORK

# V.—NORTHERN MASONRY AND BRICKWORK



VILLAGE craft-work in the North of England possesses distinctive characteristics, and its peculiarities are well defined. The buildings bear a relationship to those elsewhere, yet are a type in themselves, divided from the main trend of architectural development by their own particular features. Nowhere is the effect of local influence more apparent. They betray the individuality, the outlook upon life, and the conception of things, that distinguished the northern from the southern mind. Work in the north and south, considered together, is in a small degree comparable to the architecture of different peoples, which displays manifest contrasts of race and creed. It was no trifling spirit that brought into being the cottages on the Yorkshire wilds, or those in the mountainous district of Lancashire. Here nature was in stern mood, the elements had to be resisted. There is a certain rugged character in the buildings, accurately representing the external circumstances and underlying powers that were continuous and permanent.

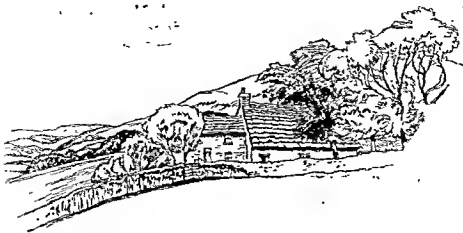
Of all the influences that operated to determine the appearance of these stone-built cottages, that of temperament seems to have been the most potent. The species of stone procurable, it is true, was of much significance. Mr. Alfred Gotch says that "in Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire, where the stone is hard, the work is of a plainer and more severe type"\* That well sums up the general run of cottage work, a



FIRWOOD FOLD, LANCASHIRE

\* "The Growth of the English House," J. Alfred Gotch

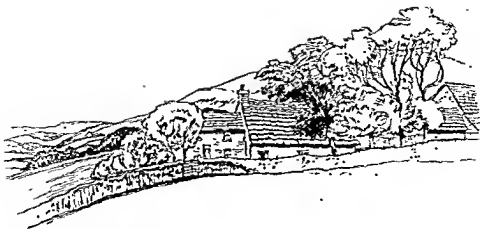




APPLETREE, LANCASHIRE

consequence of the use of material. But it was not a districts of the oölite—similar to that found in the Cotswold shire,—or where the magnesian limestone occurs—such building of King's College Chapel, Cambridge,—the same although the stone was suited to the richest effects of work leads to the supposition that the great working factor was that of the northerner, his interpretation was quite personal. material in his own way, and his efforts bore evidence of his. The rough northern climate played its part in determining architecture, and accounted in no small way for that austerity is distinguished. The cottages bear testimony to this, and suggestive of climatic conditions can well be imagined. They on high and exposed places, as at Appletree, in Lancashire Clapdale, in Yorkshire (page 111), they seem to defy wind. They are, too, admirably suited to their surroundings. One travel over the mountains and moors of Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Derbyshire, to see and feel how well the way of building was local conditions. The mountains are grand and solitary; while wild loveliness of romantic dales, watered by fast-flowing rivers is ever alluring. The stone crops out from the mountain side craggy masses, and the buildings, of like material, form an integral the landscape. There is such agreement in the whole, such harmony the eminent merit of the northern villages lies in this fact. appropriateness that gives them their claim to serious consideration architecture, and the drawings of Knaresborough, in Yorkshire (p. and Stanton-in-the-Peak, in Derbyshire (page 115), demonstrate point.

Oölite, lias, magnesian limestone, sandstone, and carboniferous lias are all found in the three counties. Much of the stone is of a sombre colour, enlivened here and there by patches of warmer hues shown in the coloured drawing from Penistone, in Yorkshire (op.



APPLETREE, LANCASHIRE

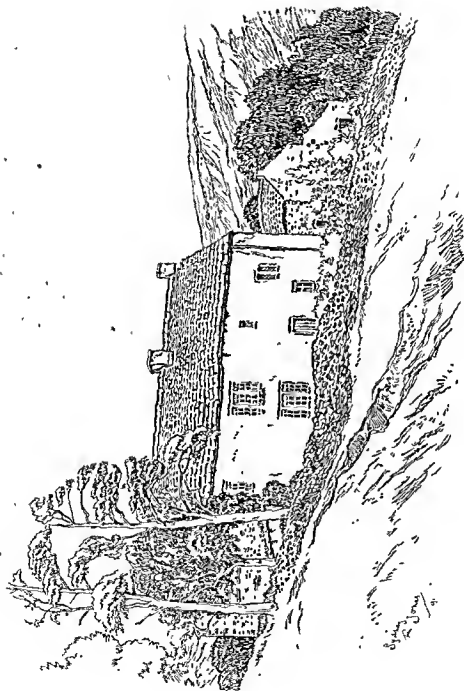
consequence of the use of material. But it was not always so. In the districts of the oolite—similar to that found in the Cotswolds and Somersetshire,—or where the magnesian limestone occurs—such as was used in building of King's College Chapel, Cambridge,—the same severity is seen, although the stone was suited to the richest effects of workmanship. This leads to the supposition that the great working factor was the temperament of the northerner, his interpretation was quite personal. He used his material in his own way, and his efforts bore evidence of his nature.

The rough northern climate played its part in determining the type or architecture, and accounted in no small way for that austerity by which it is distinguished. The cottages bear testimony to this, and nothing more suggestive of climatic conditions can well be imagined. There, perched on high and exposed places, as at Appletree, in Lancashire (above), or Clapdale, in Yorkshire (page 111), they seem to defy wind and storm. They are, too, admirably suited to their surroundings. One has only to travel over the mountains and moors of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire, to see and feel how well the way of building was adapted to local conditions. The mountains are grand and solitary; while below, the wild loveliness of romantic dales, watered by fast-flowing rivers and streams, is ever alluring. The stone crops out from the mountain sides in huge, craggy masses, and the buildings, of like material, form an integral part of the landscape. There is such agreement in the whole, such harmony, and the eminent merit of the northern villages lies in this fact. It is their appropriateness that gives them their claim to serious consideration as architecture, and the drawings of Knaresborough, in Yorkshire (page 113), and Stanton-in-the-Peak, in Derbyshire (page 115), demonstrate this point.

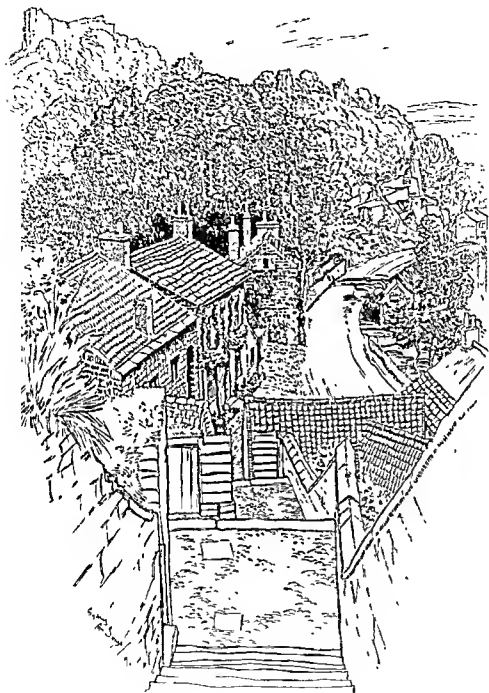
Oolite, lias, magnesian limestone, sandstone, and carboniferous limestone, are all found in the three counties. Much of the stone is of a dull and sombre colour, enlivened here and there by patches of warmer hue, as is shown in the coloured drawing from Penistone, in Yorkshire (opposite).



PENISTONE YORKSHIRE FROM A PEN AND  
WATER-COLOUR DRAWING BY SYDNEY R JONES



CLAPDALE, YORKSHIRE



KNARESBOROUGH, YORKSHIRE

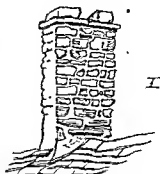
custom to whitewash the exterior face of stonework, in the manner of the far buildings at Dent, in Yorkshire (page 119). Doorways and windows would then be accentuated by colouring the masonry which surrounded them.

The refinement and fanciful treatment so common to stonework in the southern counties is absent here. What ornament there is has little in it to arrest the eye. Details—gable finials, kneelers, and the like—often border on crudeness. Of an elementary character are the two chimneys from Halton, in Lancashire, and that from Burton Leonard, in Yorkshire, all of which are illustrated

on this page; yet they are perfectly suited to the buildings they serve. The same feeling is evident in the date panel from Scotton, in Yorkshire (page 122, No. 2), with its quaint attempt at carving in low relief. The lights of stone windows are narrow, divided by heavy mullions, and have



HALTON, LANCASHIRE

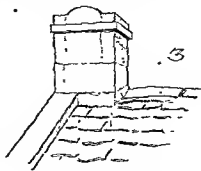


HALTON, LANCASHIRE

over them a protecting label, as at Firwood Fold, in Lancashire (page 109). Many stoce-framed windows have glazing contained in wooden lights, and these lights are neither casement nor sash, but slide to and fro; the windows at Eyam (page 117) open in this way. The employment of wooden eaves-gutters, down-spouts, and rain-water heads was general, and examples are shown from Green Hammerton, in Yorkshire, and Halton, in Lancashire (page 116, Nos. 1 and 2).

Down-spouts are square in section and consist of four pieces of wood, nailed together. Some gutters are moulded on their outer face, as is the one at Green Hammerton, just mentioned. Villagers throughout the north of England make a practice of sanding the steps to doorways. It is an odd custom, many years old, which still survives. The stone step is run over with water, partly dried, and to the damp surface is applied dry sand or sandstone. Varied are the patterns that are worked on risers and treads. One from Dolphinholme, in Lancashire, is given on page 116; it is carried out in white and ochre-coloured sand, upon cool, grey stone.

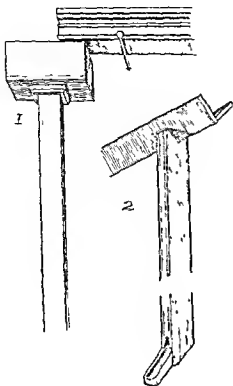
In the neighbourhood of Lancaster is to be found a type of doorway of quite a special kind, which does not, to the present writer's knowledge, occur elsewhere. It is distinguished by the particular



BURTON LEONARD, YORKSHIRE



STANTON-IN-THE-PEAK, DERBYSHIRE

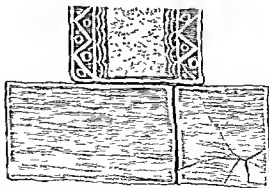


WOODEN SPOUTING

of the northern counties. Over a very long space of time variations of the same forms were employed, and work belonging to the eighteenth century, especially in the higher parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, differs little from that of 150 years earlier. On comparatively recent work Professor Blomfield states that "even in the mill architecture of the Yorkshire manufacturing towns, harsh and forbidding as it is, there remained a certain local quality, and some of the dignity of the eighteenth century in buildings erected as late as 1840."\* When a change from the old tradition did come, and the conquering classic influence was drawn upon for inspiration, the new manner was but imperfectly understood, and a clumsy, heavy interpretation, lacking in delicacy, was generally the

enrichment of the headstone. 'Over the doorway are two sunk panels, surrounded by a moulding which is continued upwards from the jambs; and the raised centre panel commonly carries a carved date and initials. These dates denote the period at which this fashion in doorways was prevalent; those at Halton, in Lancashire, and at Lancaster (page 121) are dated 1672 and 1701 respectively; and the restored cottage at Abbeystead (page 123) has an old lintel dated 1677. Simpler ornamental doorheads are illustrated from Wyersdale, Lancashire, and Lancaster (page 122, Nos. 1 and 3).

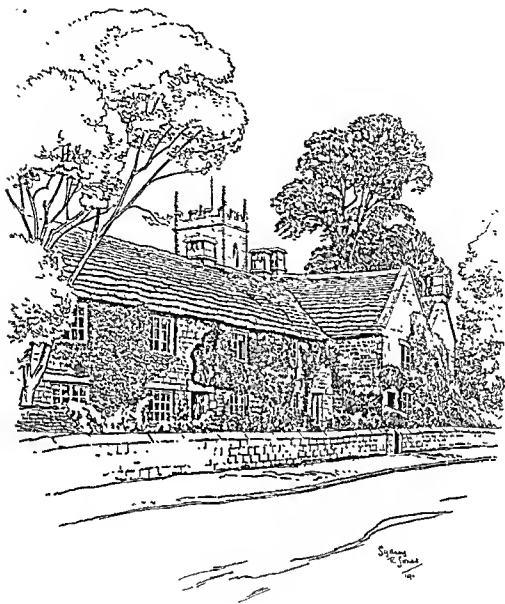
By their form and treatment, and by their repetition at different periods, the ornaments and details show how carefully old tradition was maintained and how tardily it was abandoned. The old villagers were loyal to the naturally developed style. Conservatism was fostered by the nature of the country and its isolation; its influence is obvious in the buildings

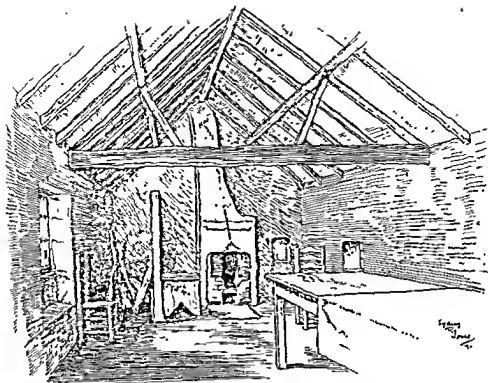


SANDSTONE ENTRANCE STEPS

\* "Renaissance Architecture in England," by Reginald Blomfield, M.A.



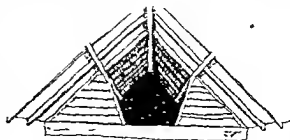




STAVELEY, YORKSHIRE

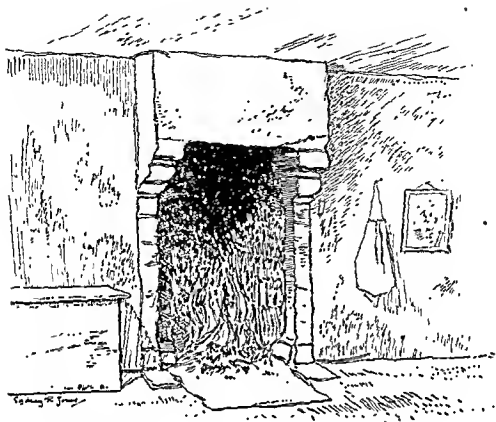
result. Strangely incongruous some of these small buildings, which show the change in fashion, look ; and, however suited such types may be to certain kinds of landscape, they seem misplaced among the rugged, mountainous scenery of the Pennines.

A remarkable interior exists at Staveley, in Yorkshire, and is illustrated on this page. It is primitive in its arrangement, and gives a good idea of what, apparently, was once the customary abode of the village worker and his family. Two rooms are on the ground floor and there is no upper story. The stone walls are inwardly faced with plaster. There is no ceiling, the timbers of the roof being thus exposed to view. At one end of the cottage a small upper floor has been inserted, extending from the cross-beam to the gable-end. This was the sleeping apartment. It is shown by the diagram on this page and was reached from below by a ladder. The two triangular spaces framed by the beam, posts, and rafters



ENTRANCE TO SLEEPING LOFT OF ABOVE COTTAGE

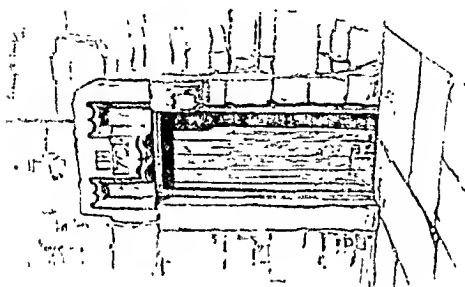




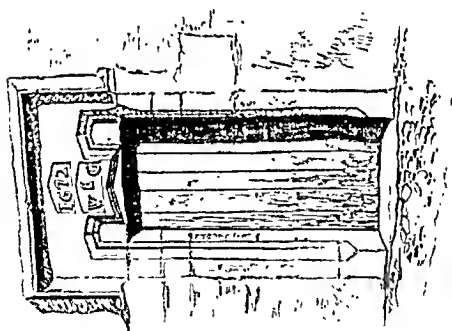
FARNHAM, YORKSHIRE

of the roof, are boarded over, and the central open space was the place of access. By people of the twentieth century such a place for sleeping may well be considered rudimentary, and there is small wonder that this habitation has now been condemned by the local authorities. The stone fireplace from Farnham, in Yorkshire (above), is not without interest, and is another instance of the continuance of olden practice. It has much in common with fireplaces of the thirteenth century, and resembles them in the shallow depth of the hearth, and in the heavy stonework at the head supported by corbels.

On the flat lands around York are cottages with walls of brickwork and pantile roofs. The bricks are pale in tint and lack colour. Front walls are generally wholly of brick; some show alternate horizontal divisions of brick and rubble, while many back and interior walls are of the two materials, or of stone only. Simple string-courses were employed to ornament and break up surfaces of plain walling; they consist of ordinary or moulded bricks, manipulated in a satisfactory way, and show as dentils, projecting courses, or bricks laid dog-tooth fashion at an angle to the wall's face. Under the eaves, and at the first floor level of the cottages at Green Hammerton, in Yorkshire (page 124), the brick string-courses may be seen.



LANCASTER



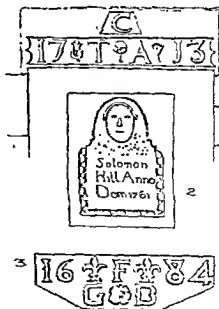
HALTON, LANCASHIRE



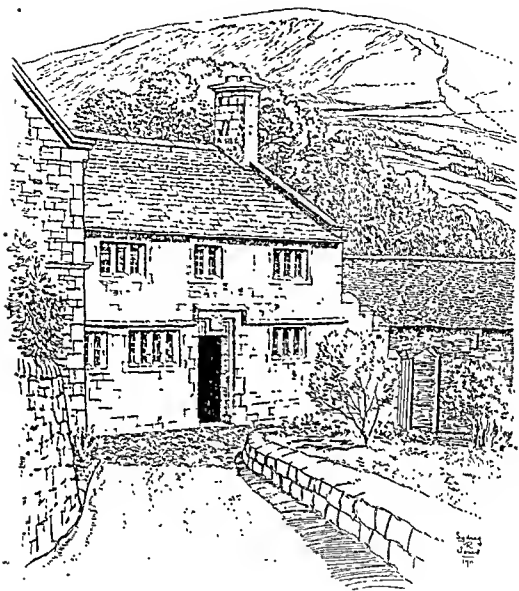
FARNHAM, YORKSHIRE

The gable-end of this example is of a kind that can often be observed in the district round; in fact, such gables are prevalent throughout the north-eastern counties, and are as much features of Suffolk as of Yorkshire. They are singular in having an angular arrangement of brickwork opposing the horizontal courses, and flush brick copings at the head. The use of pantiles for roofs was very general and they found their way into the stone regions, as the illustration from Farnham, in Yorkshire (above), demonstrates.

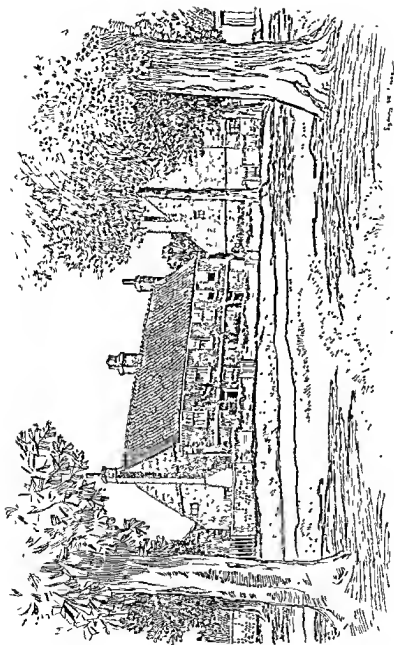
Half-timbering, although it was a building method of the towns and found favour with erectors of large halls, is not conspicuous in the country villages. At York (page 125), Bolton, and elsewhere examples are to be found, while the timbered halls of southern Lancashire are justly famous. But it is not in the timberwork, or in the brickwork, that the real architectural expression of the northerner is to be sought. In the stonework this lies; in the scattered dwellings of Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire.



DATE PANELS



ABBEYSTED, LANCASHIRE









DIVISION VI

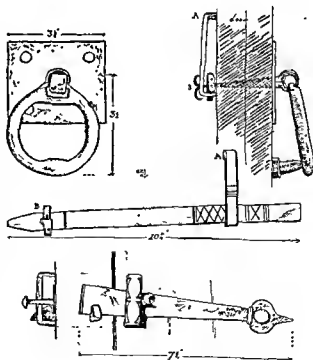
METALWORK AND WOODWORK

## VI.—METALWORK AND WOODWORK.



THE direct and straightforward methods that characterised the handling of the building materials for the village dwellings were applied to the making of their metal fittings, and to those movable objects which added to the convenience of daily life. Primarily utilitarian, they were also beautiful. They possessed that quality which arises from a nicely adjusted sense of use on the one hand, and adornment on the other; and in addition to being suited to their purpose, they were ornamental. There was no conscious striving after effect, and the materials were fashioned with due regard to their nature, the results being raised from the commonplace by such touches of taste as were conceived best by the worker. Very gratifying to the eye were many of the designs, excellent examples of manipulative skill.

Tradition was strong in influencing metalwork, as it was in other branches of village craft. Through generations seeking for improvement, by long periods of use, patterns and executive methods were perfected. The origin of many utensils and implements, that became the ordinary adjuncts of the home, was traceable to needs of long ago. Full of suggestion are the very names—the chimney-crane, the roasting-jack, rush-light holders, and the rest—recalling to mind olden ways of living that have now been superseded. Local types developed in metalwork, just as they did in building. The blacksmithing of Kent and Sussex had certain distinctions; there was a special pattern for case-ments in Berkshire; while the district around Chipping Campden, in Gloucestershire, had its particular form of case-ment-fastener. North, south, east and west of England little variations and singularities occur

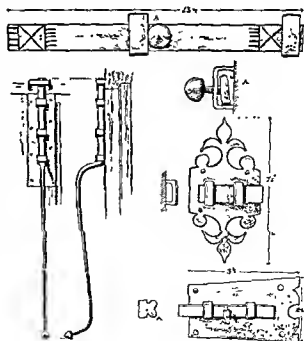


IRON DOOR-LATCHES FROM GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND WARWICKSHIRE

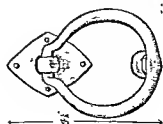
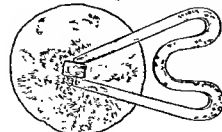
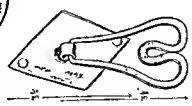
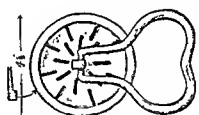
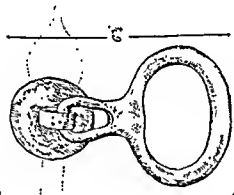
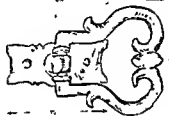
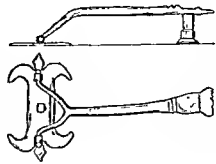
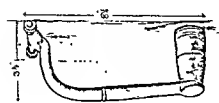
in objects that were common to all parts. Localities now-a-days are losing their distinguishing marks. Those things to which the village worker once gave his thought are now but rarely made, and only occasionally one has the good fortune to meet a smith who knows the old patterns and can make them. The treasures that used to adorn the cottages have mostly been acquired by collectors, or distributed in other ways. But interesting and curious objects are still to be found among the heterogeneous possessions of villagers, some of real old local work, some obviously from other parts.

Metalwork in cottages falls under two heads, viz. :—that which was fitted or fixed to the buildings, and that which was movable. To the first-named group belong door and window fittings. The entrance door, often accentuated by the surrounding structural brickwork, timbers, or masonry, was given further importance by the ironwork with which it was adorned ; hinges, latches, bolts, handles, or arranged nail-heads, added to the effect. Many are examples of true smithing, honest in execution, suited to their purpose, and not displeasing in form. Handles and knockers of simple wrought ironwork from Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Essex, Surrey and Shropshire, are shown on page 131, and may be considered typical specimens. Many latches and bolts were decorated with incised patterns, such as are seen in the illustration on this page, and in the door-latches shown on page 129 ; it was a style of enrichment generally practised, and peculiar to no particular district. That the old workers were not wanting in a sense of grace is demonstrated by the refinement, of the good latch from Warwickshire, fellow to the one above-mentioned, on page 129 ; and on this page, by the shaping of the back-plates that carry the bolts.

Window-casements, to which leaded lights were fixed, and the necessary fittings for their adjustment, were objects for the village blacksmith's special skill. To them his best work was given and much fine smithcraft may still be seen. Always strongly lighted from behind, and showing more or less in silhouette, the well-designed shapes were aptly placed.



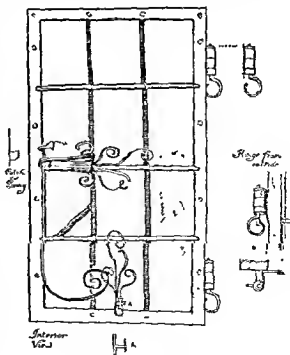
IRON DOOR-BOLTS FROM WARWICKSHIRE



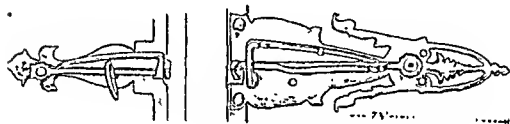
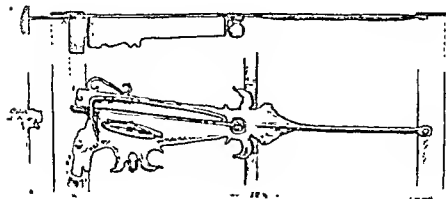
IRON DOOR-HANDLES AND KNOCKERS FROM WORCESTERSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, ESSEX, SURREY AND SHROPSHIRE

Two complete casements are shown, one from Marston Magna, in Somerset (opposite), having an uncommon fastening, and one from East Hendred (on this page), representing the Berkshire type, with scrolls too lightly constructed for long service. Spring casement-fasteners from Worcestershire and Somerset are reproduced opposite.

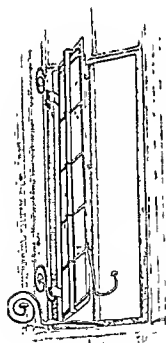
Around the open fireplace circled the life of the home. The chimney-crane, utilitarian in its motive, was treated as a decorative centrepiece for the cavernous depth of the fireplace opening. It was embellished in a strong and suitable way, and with a view to its constant proximity to fire. Chimney-cranes often furnish instances of extraordinary ability on the part of the smith. A fine specimen from Sussex appears on page 134, and a simpler one, from a farmhouse at Churchill, in Worcestershire, on the same page; it will be observed that each has two movements. The movable accessories, dogs, pots, fireirons, footmen and trivets, would be within convenient reach. One of the wrought-iron fire-dogs given on page 134, from Kingston, in the Isle of Wight, has supports for spits; and the other, called cup or posset-dog, has an arrangement at the top for holding tankards or mugs. Fire-irons of various patterns appear on pages 135 and 136. Some are of traditional smith's work; others, from Wiltshire, are brightly polished and adorned with those vase-shaped forms so commonly employed in the eighteenth century. Notable are the tongs with branched terminations for moving logs, and the beautiful pierced iron shovel. The iron footman and fender, illustrated on page 135, are good examples of pierced and hammered ironwork. On the same page is a reproduction of an unusual object, a fire-cover, from Lancashire. It was used to cover the fire at Cusfew, when, by custom introduced in William the Conqueror's days, all fires were put out and lights extinguished. The one exemplified is of brass, the patterns having been beaten up on separate strips and riveted on. Other utensils that were in daily use are shown on page 137. Dip and rush-light-holders stood on the floor or were suspended from the wall. Two of those illustrated are standards with metal



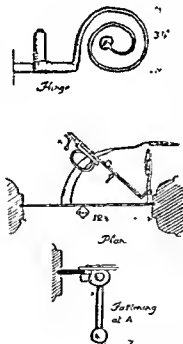
WINDOW-CASEMENT FROM BERKSHIRE



SPRING CASMENT-FASTENERS FROM WORCESTER-  
SHIRE AND SOMERSETSHIRE



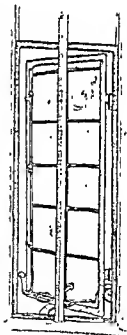
Exterior View



Hinge

Plan

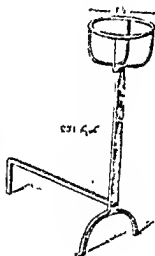
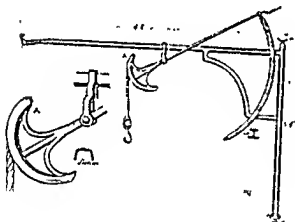
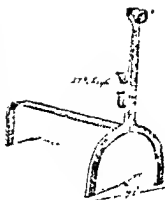
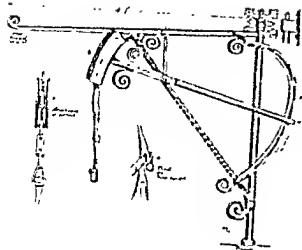
Fastening  
at A



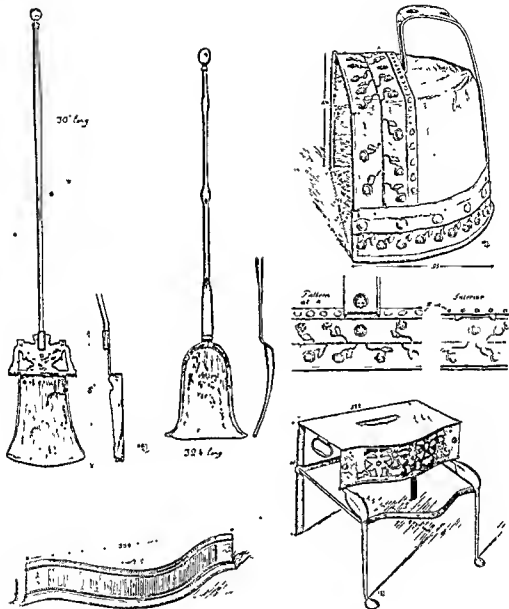
Interior View

WINDOW-CASEMENT FROM SOMERSETSHIRE



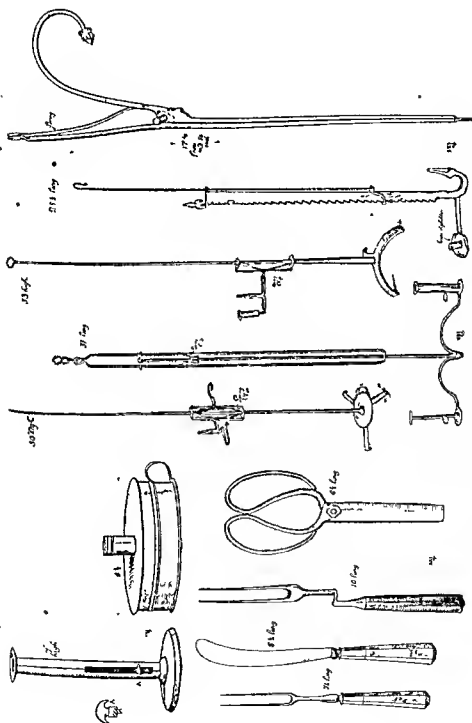


IRON KITCHEN-CRANES FROM SUSSEX AND WORCESTERSHIRE  
AND FIRE-DOGS FROM THE ISLE OF WIGHT AND SUSSEX

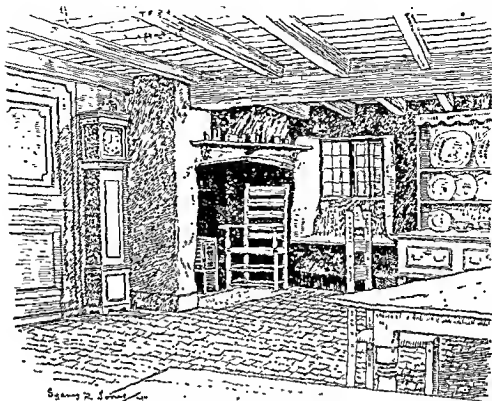


IRON FIRE-SHOVELS FROM SUSSEX AND DERBYSHIRE, BRASS FIRE-COVER FROM LANCASHIRE, AND IRON FENDER AND FOOTMAN FROM SUSSEX





IRON CANDLESTICKS, DIP-HOLDERS AND RUSILICHT-HOLDERS FROM DERBYSHIRE AND SUSSEX  
IRON SCISSORS, BRAND-TONGS, KNIFE AND FORKS FROM SUSSEX



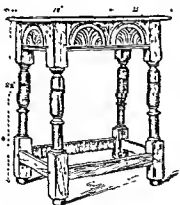
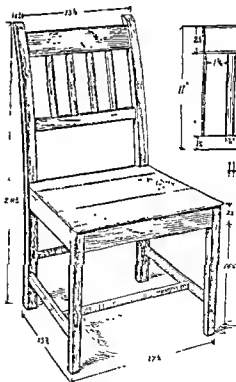
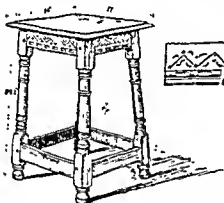
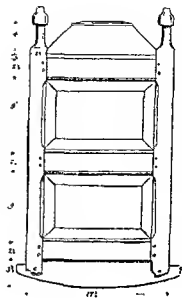
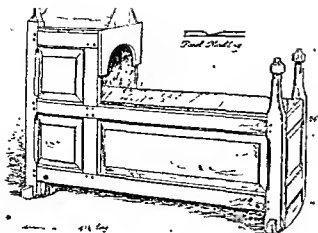
STOKE ALBANY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

bases, and two are for hanging ; in all cases the actual holders are adjustable, and would be held in position by means of a spring or ratchet. Before the introduction of matches the tinder-box was a necessity to every home ; the circular box at the base of the round hand-candlestick in the illustration, the lid of which is movable, held the flint, steel, and tinder for obtaining light. The right-hand specimen, a pair of iron brand-tongs used for picking glowing embers from the fire to light tobacco, is tooled at the angles, and the lines of the design are admirable.

Simple and unambitious, the products of the village woodworkers were strong, useful, and not lacking in beauty. The craftsmen appreciated the nature of the material in which they worked, and the character of each object was more or less suggested by the quality of the wood. The treatment of oak differed from that of ash, and ash from elm. The natural grain and texture of the woods, not obscured, heightened effects of craftsmanship. Sound construction was a controlling factor, and gave forms suitable and good.

In times gone by, villagers treasured their fine old furniture and took pride in retaining the heirlooms of their families. There is still good reason to think that certain old pieces seen have descended from father to son through a long period. But such is not generally the case, and it is now





OAK CRADLE FROM GLOUCESTERSHIRE, OAK JOINT-STOOLS FROM SOMERSETSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE, AND OAK CHAIR FROM WARWICKSHIRE

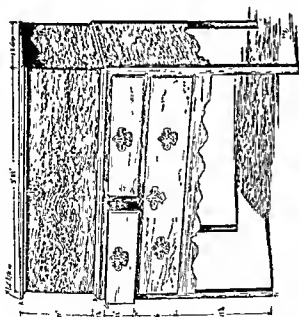
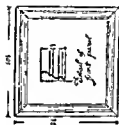
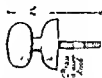
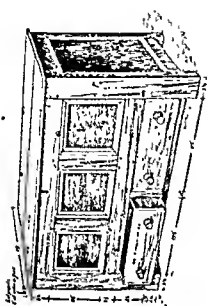


OAK TABLE FROM GLOUCESTERSHIRE

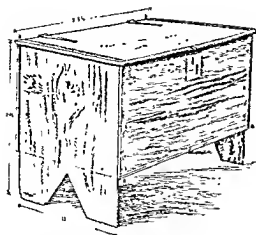
rare to find old dressers, chairs, and tables—such as those at Stoke Albany, in Northamptonshire (page 138), which have now been distributed—in the places they have occupied for years past. Oak furniture was pegged together with oak pins, a system of fastening that warded off decay. Joint-stools, so constructed, were at one time frequently to be found in the villages. Two examples of the familiar seventeenth century type, from Ditchat, Somersetshire, and Whittington, Gloucestershire, are given on page 139; each has a carved top rail and turned legs. The oak arm-chair on page 140 has arms of a pattern that was usual, and on the back rails and legs are gouged incisions. Very similar is the chair shown on page 139, but it lacks the arms; both examples are from Warwickshire. An ash chair, with traverse bars on different widths at the back and a turned front rail, is illustrated on page 140.

On page 141 is shown a gate-leg table from Derbyshire, obviously of village workmanship. The oval top is in three pieces and has two hinged flaps secured to the fixed centre-piece. The oak table on this page, fitted with a drawer, was found in a secluded cottage on the borders of Gloucestershire, and has the characteristics of seventeenth century work. Of a much later date is the mahogany table appearing on page 141, and it demonstrates how another style of work was evolved to suit a different kind of wood. The support beneath the flap has a wooden hinge that works round a wooden pin, while the brass drawer-handle is of graceful design. Chests, for domestic or other purposes, have had a long association with village life. The parish chest, kept within the church, was often a fine





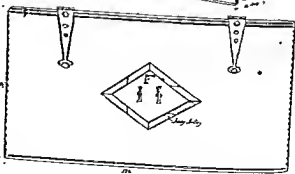
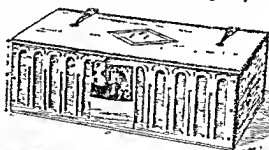
OAK CHESTS WITH DRAWERS AND BRASS FITTINGS



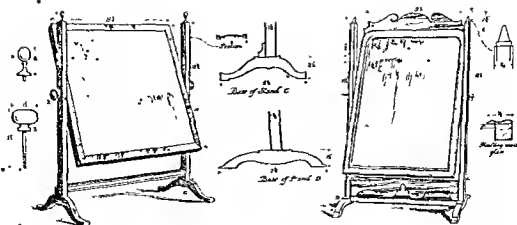
OAK CLOTHES-HUTCH FROM  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

hinges, and ivory inlay on the lid. It was, no doubt, originally used as a bible-box, a usual possession of old country people. Miscellaneous objects of cottage furniture are the two mahogany framed looking-glasses, illustrated on page 145, and the oak cradle from Gloucestershire (page 139), provided with a hood, and apparently belonging to the latter part of the seventeenth century. Structural fittings, the work of the carpenter, were sensibly contrived. The wooden window-seat, made in the thickness of the wall, rose as a flap, and opened to view a roomy box beneath. Over the open-

and elaborate piece or craft-work. The linen-chest, or clothes-hutch, of the cottager was made on more simple lines; the flat top served as a seat. Some chests were carved on front and ends, but more often they were plain, or merely panelled, as are the Buckinghamshire examples on pages 143 and 144. Handles and lockplates, when of brass, contrasted brightly with the wood. The appearance of the oak chest with drawers (page 143) is enhanced by the brass fittings; while the teak chest (opposite) is strengthened with brass plates at the angles, and decorated with brass studs on the lid. The small carved box shown below comes from Wooferton, in Herefordshire, and has an iron lockplate and

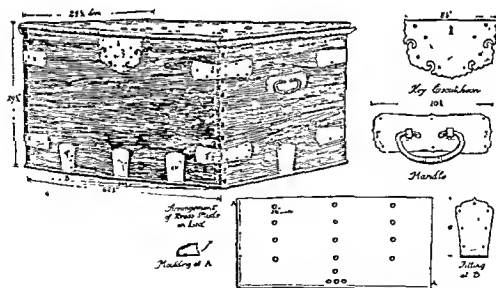


CARVED OAK BOX FROM HEREFORDSHIRE

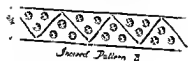
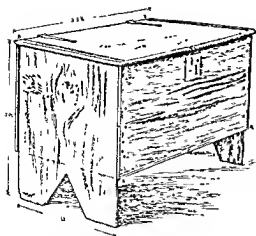


MAHOGANY FRAMED LOOKING-GLASSES

ing of the fire-place, and extending from it to the ceiling, would sometimes be a spit-rack to hold the polished spits. An example, from Warnham in Sussex, is given on page 146. Both members of the rack project five inches from the wall, and are ornamented with simple cut-out work. The old pattern ledged door—consisting of upright boards fastened to horizontal ledges—with its iron latch and strap-hinges, always looked appropriate to its place. This method of construction fortunately still survives in country places.



TEAK CHEST WITH BRASS FITTINGS

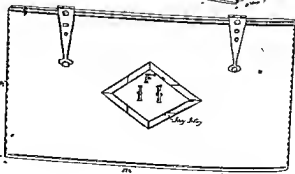
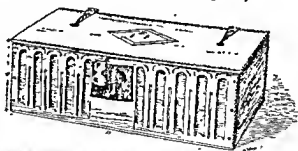


OAK CLOTHES-HUTCH FROM  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



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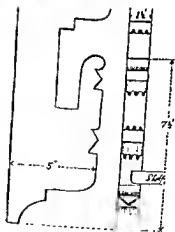
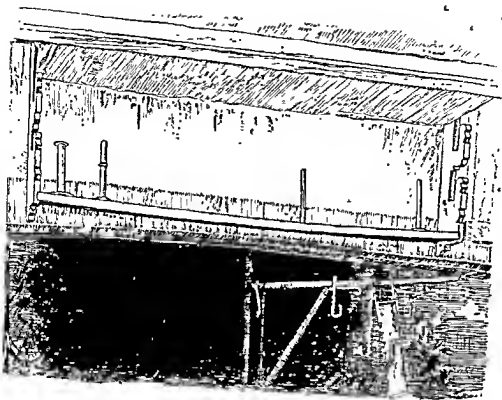
and elaborate piece or craft-work. The linen-chest, or clothes-hutch, of the cottager was made on more simple lines; the flat top served as a seat. Some chests were carved on front and ends, but more often they were plain, or merely panelled, as are the Buckinghamshire examples on pages 143 and 144. Handles and lockplates, when of brass, contrasted brightly with the wood. The appearance of the oak chest with drawers (page 143) is enhanced by the brass fittings; while the teak chest (opposite) is strengthened with brass plates at the angles, and decorated with brass studs on the lid. The small carved box shown below comes from Wooferton, in Herefordshire, and has an iron lockplate and



CARVED OAK BOX FROM HEREFORDSHIRE

DIVISION VII

GARDENS

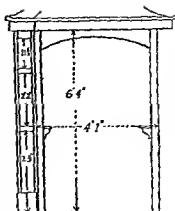
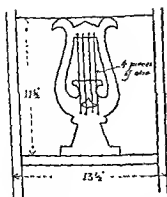


SPIT-RACK FROM WARNHAM, SUSSEX

DIVISION VII

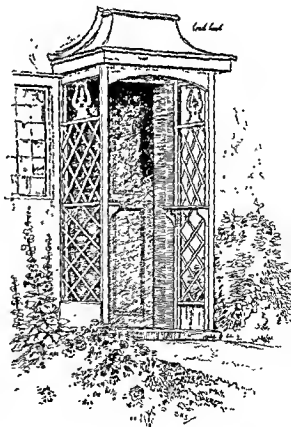
GARDENS

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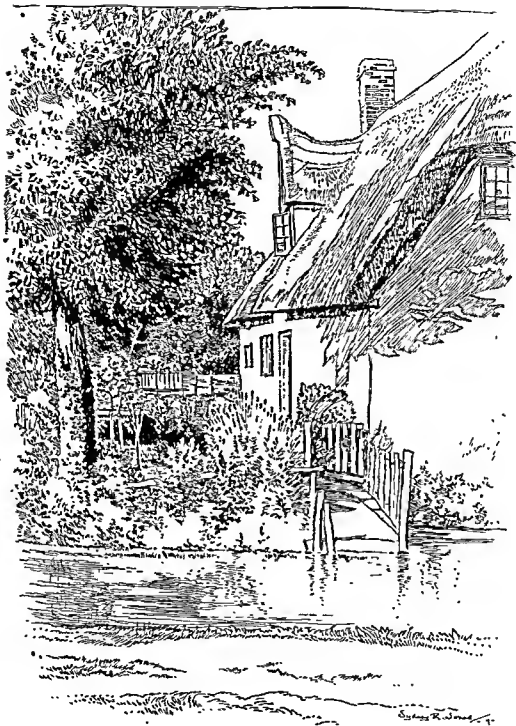
currants and gooseberries. In shady places rhubarb flourished and nut were near the boundary hedge. Near to the house flowers bloomed and their fragrance was wafted within. Little front gardens bordered the road, a joy for the passer-by.

The cleft oak fencing that enclosed so many old gardens always looked well and was very durable. It is now, unfortunately, usually replaced by machine-cut oak or larch. Where walls were used for boundary divisions, they partook of the manner of the buildings they surrounded, and there was thus an affinity between each. Wiltshire garden walls, like those of the cottages, were of cob, and flint, and brick, and stone. Two, from Winterbourne Dantsey and Upper Woodford, in Wiltshire, are illustrated on page 155; each is protected from the weather by thatching, most picturesquely applied. A

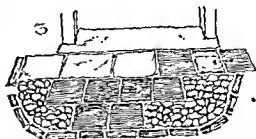
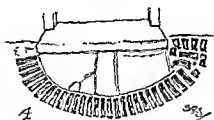
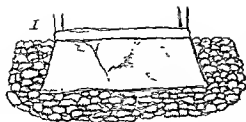


GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX





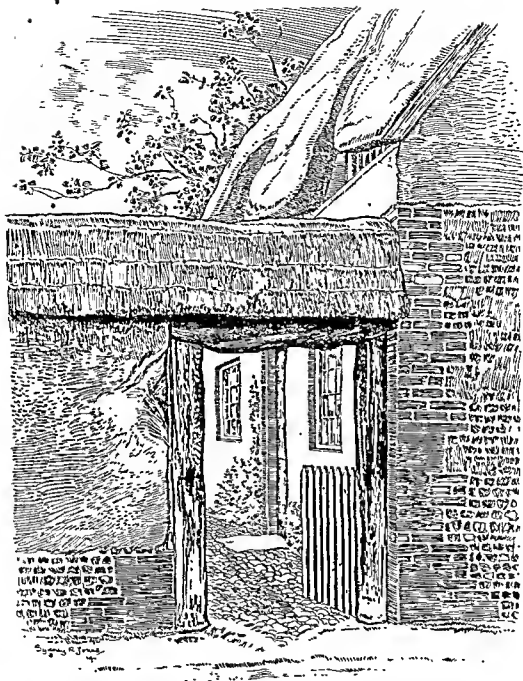
SHEPRETH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE



PAVINGS IN FRONT OF DOORWAYS IN OXFORDSHIRE

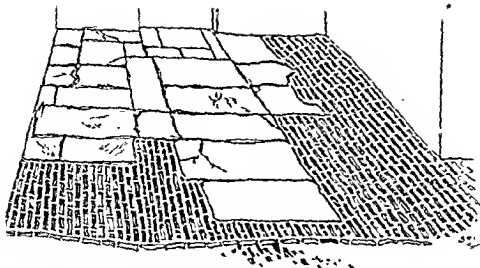
stone wall from Hanwell, in Oxfordshire (page 149), is rich with mosses, and above are cut box trees and laurels. At Winterbourne Gunner, in Wiltshire (opposite), the gateway has been effectively treated, and the thatching of the wall continues over the oak-framed opening. In Yorkshire the piers at each side of gates are each of one stone only. The cottage at Nether Compton, in Dorset (page 157), is approached by a flight of stone steps, and two cut yews border the way. The entrance path was frequently paved with the handiest material the locality afforded, and many charming effects in stone, bricks, and cobbles may be seen. There is a beautiful garden at Alhampton, in Somersetshire (page 158), luxuriant with flowers in the summer-time; it has a stone-paved way and flower-beds edged with upright stones. Other simple methods of paving are shown by the illustrations from Oxfordshire, on this page, and Upper Boddington, Northamptonshire (page 154), they are carried out in stone, old narrow bricks, quarries, and cobbles. The original of the porch given on page 150 is at Great Chesterford, in Essex, and is painted green, which shows effectively against the white plaster wall.

Yew trees have from time out of mind been associated with English villages. They were commonly planted in churchyards—fitting places for trees that were regarded as emblems of immortality. At the festival of Easter they used to furnish greenery for the decoration of the churches. But yew trees were not confined to churchyards. In squires' gardens they were trained and cut; they bordered shady walks and bowers. Village gardens, too, had their clipped work in yew and box, and much of it can still be seen. It is generally limited to the shaping of one or two trees and there is little attempt at formal arrangement. Yew trees that have been cut into fantastic shapes, such as those at Upper Boddington, in Northamptonshire (page 159), are exceptional, and the usual forms are of simple outline.



WINTERBOURNE GUSSER, WILTSHIRE

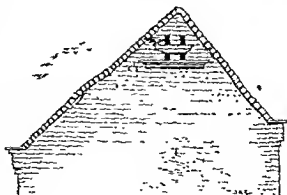




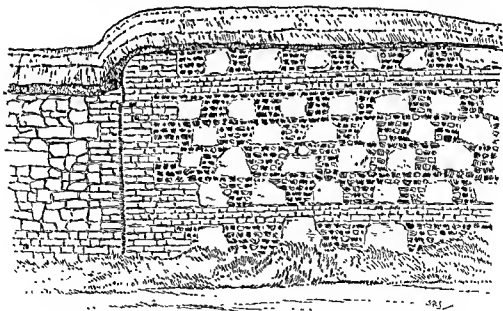
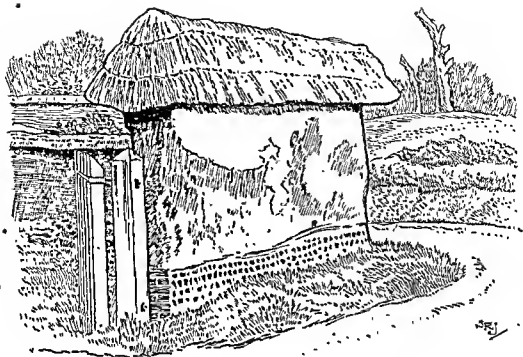
PAVING IN FRONT OF DOORWAY AT UPPER  
MOLLINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

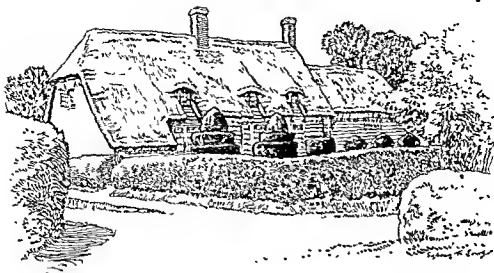
Two at Glaston, in Rutland (page 160), help to seclude the cottage from the high-road; and a series of circular shrubs edge the walk at Therfield, in Hertfordshire (page 156). The two box trees that guard the stone-paved entrance way at Mollington, in Oxfordshire (page 161), are well cut and effectively placed. They, and the adjoining box hedges, give colour to the group. Another Oxfordshire example is the box tree, trained close to the stone wall, at Hanwell (page 160). The deep green of these trees afford excellent backgrounds for the display of flowers. Some allege that yews and box harbour insects and pests, deprive plants growing near of nutriment, and make the successful growing of flowers in close proximity an impossibility. But that cannot be always so, for flowers in such positions in cottage gardens flourish amazingly.

No more charming country sight can be seen than a clipped peacock, some other quaintly cut device in yew, with flower-beds around, enclosed by short lengths of box edging. Here flowers come and go as seasons pass; snowdrops, crocuses, flow daffodils, primises, sweet-scented gilliflowers, early tulips and crocuses. With the advancing season come the



LONG MARSTON, YORKSHIRE



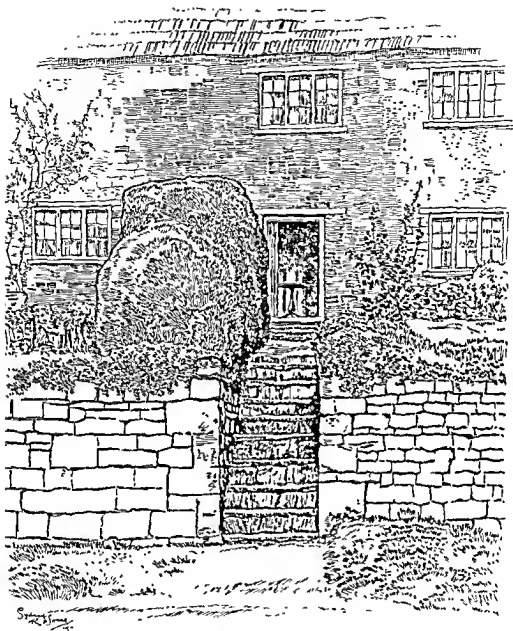


THERFIELD, HERTFORDSHIRE

columbines, pinks, roses, and the brave show of summer blossom, and autumn days are rich with fragrance.

Pigeons circle round many village homes, harmful for the seeds, perhaps, but pleasant to see. Cottagers used to keep them, and provision was sometimes made in old buildings for sheltering the birds. The upper part of the brick gable at Long Marston, in Yorkshire (page 154), served for a pigeon house; the perches are of stone. On south walls of cottages sundials were sometimes placed. The Yorkshire example, from Dent (page 163), is situated over an entrance porch and surrounded by ivy. At Alhampton, in Somersetshire (page 38), the dial is contained on a rectangular stone which is affixed to the gable point. Before the days of watches and clocks, sundials were the countryman's only mode of counting time. The sunlight marked the fleeting hours; on dull and lowering days the passage of time was unrecorded. "I count only the hours that are serene" was graven on a dial-plate at which Hazlitt pictured a studious monk looking on sunny days. And peaceful thoughts, such as are contained in the words of this inscription, do old sundials suggest, *they bring to mind pictures of a calm and easy-going past*. As time goes by, the old cottages and their trim gardens continue to add beauty to the countryside. The garden gates, as in days of long ago, open on to narrow paths that lead to those ancient structures, the village homes of England, changeless objects amid a changing world.

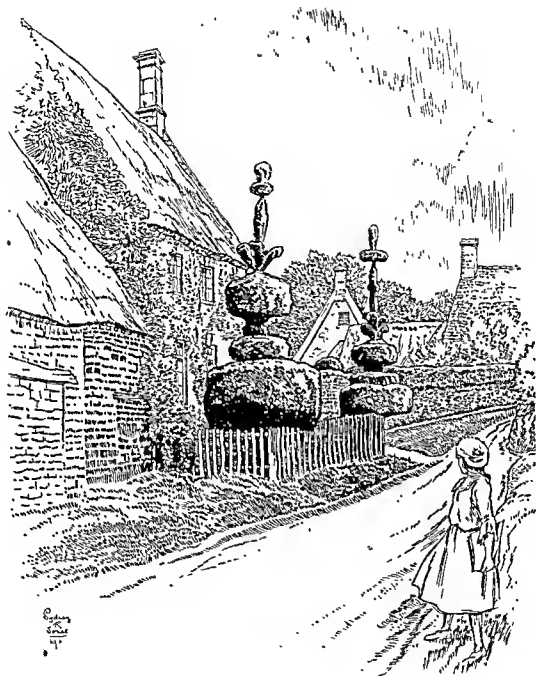
SYDNEY R. JONES.



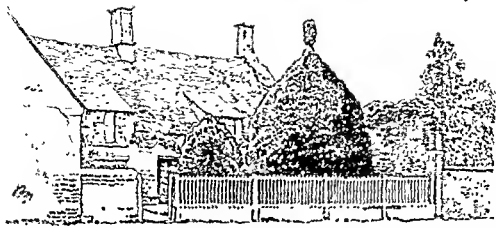
NETHER COMPTON, DORSETSHIRE







UPPER BODDINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



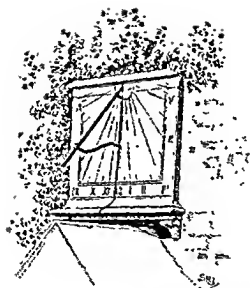
GLASTON, RUTLAND



HANWELL, OXFORDSHIRE







DENT, YORKSHIRE